

Le Mans centenary report **special issue**

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15 JUNE 2023

FERRARI WINS LE MANS!

**Giovinazzi, Calado and Pier Guidi
top titanic battle against Toyota**

**'We didn't expect to
survive for 24 hours'**

ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI

**'It will go down
in history as one
of the best'**

TOM KRISTENSEN



PLUS

**Alpine launches its
2024 Le Mans contender**



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A birthday to be proud of – and a big Ferrari win in 2023

Le Mans couldn't have asked for a better way to celebrate its centenary. The milestone would have made for a great event anyway, but the new Hypercar era properly getting under way and a titanic battle for victory going the way of Ferrari must have been more than even the Automobile Club de l'Ouest and FIA could have hoped for.

Congratulations to AF Corse, Ferrari and drivers James Calado, Antonio Giovinazzi and Alessandro Pier Guidi for beating Toyota, which put up the sort of performance that adds weight to its five wins scored between 2018 and 2022, even if that run came to an end.

There will always be some disquiet and doubt about the late Balance of Performance changes that hampered Toyota. Exactly how much of a difference they made is open to debate (let's not have that happen again, please) but, as Gary Watkins shows in our special report on page 18, there were many other factors that determined the result.

As ever, there were some great subplots, from the Jota squad showing that a privateer *can* challenge the factory teams in this new age to a shock LMP2 victory (p28) and a remarkable comeback in GTE Am's swansong (p32). And, of course, there was the NASCAR (p37), which made a big impression and was a good deal stronger than the 1976 effort.

It seems like the right time to launch another Global Fan Survey on the World Endurance Championship. Turn to p8 to find out how you can have your say on the future of WEC and Le Mans.



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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NEXT WEEK
22 JUNE

Canadian GP action
Can anyone stop Red Bull taking its 100th win in Formula 1?



Cover image

Ferrari

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Toyota reveals hydrogen Hypercar

WEC

Toyota has given the strongest indication yet that its long-running World Endurance Championship programme will switch over to hydrogen in the future. The Japanese manufacturer unveiled what it is calling the GR H2 Racing Concept ahead of last weekend's Le Mans 24 Hours as a pointer to what is probably to come.

The GR H2 remains very much a show car and is a long way from being a running test hack in which to develop hydrogen technology. No technical details were released and it is understood that, as it stands, the GR H2 is nothing more than a styling exercise conceived to point to where Toyota wants to take the hydrogen combustion technology it is already developing in the Corolla H2 Concept

that has been racing in Japan since 2021.

But the presence of Toyota chairman Akio Toyoda, the driving force behind the Corolla project, at the unveiling of the GR H2 on Friday of Le Mans week suggests that it is serious about taking advantage of the new hydrogen rulebook set for introduction to the WEC in 2026. His comments in France and those from Toyota Gazoo Racing team director Rob Leupen suggest that there will be a hydrogen-powered prototype from the marque racing sooner rather than later.

"Personally, my goal is to achieve carbon neutrality in motorsport without sacrificing performance or excitement," said Toyoda. "And we wouldn't be investing in this technology if we didn't think we could win with it."

Leupen insisted that work was already progressing on the project on two fronts.

"We are working very hard on this concept, like always, as a joint venture between Higashi-Fuji [where Toyota's WEC powertrains are developed] and Cologne," he said. "The target is to realise this project on the race track, but we can't make any commitments at the moment."

The ACO confirmed at the Fuji 24 Hours, two weeks before Le Mans, that it was delaying the introduction of the hydrogen class, which has been in the works since 2018. Perhaps more significant was the announcement that it would open up the class to cars with internal combustion engines fuelled by hydrogen and not just hydrogen/electric fuel cell machinery. It then wants all the cars competing in the Hypercar class to be powered by hydrogen by 2030.

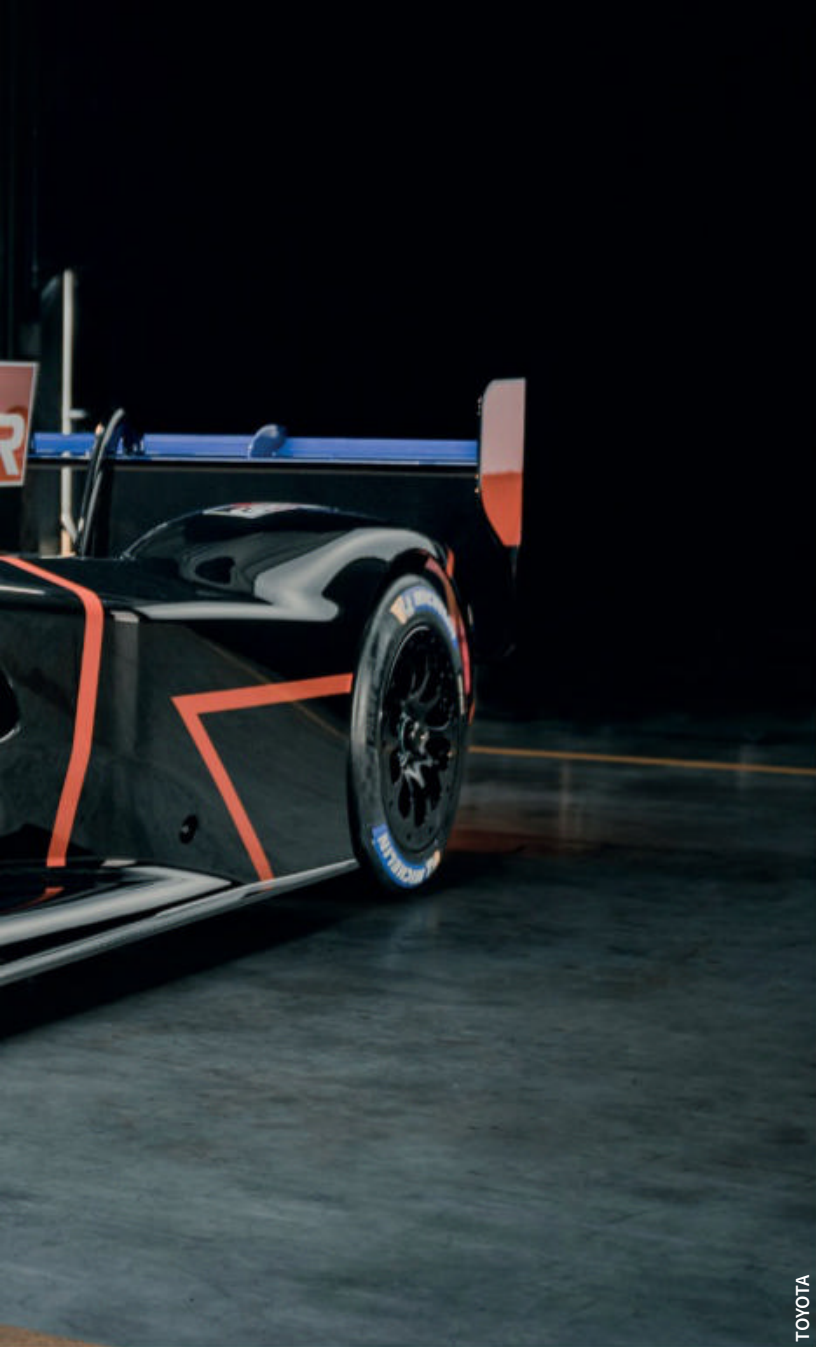
The ACO stated as long ago as 2021 that it wanted cars in the hydrogen class to be able to challenge for the outright win from the get-go. TGRE technical director Pascal Vasselon believes this will be possible with hydrogen combustion technology, and suggested that there are no insurmountable obstacles to achieving that target in year one in 2026.

"Everything is possible with a technological push," said Vasselon. "There is no road block if the technological level is allowed – it should be feasible. In most cases, the level of performance of a racing car is determined by the regulations."

Vasselon said that combustion made more sense for racing applications than



TOYOTA



TOYOTA

concept

a fuel cell, which produces electricity by a chemical reaction to power an electric motor – or motors – with water as the only byproduct. “This technology is lighter, simpler and a bit better suited to racing applications,” he explained. Asked if he believed a hydrogen fuel cell prototype could achieve Hypercar speeds in the short term, he replied: “That would be more difficult.”

The hydrogen class pioneered by the ACO had been set to be a one-make category, with the fuel cell the only element of the car developed by the manufacturers involved. The chassis was to be a joint venture between ORECA and Red Bull Racing Advanced Technology, while the contract for the motors had been awarded to GreenGT, the Franco-Swiss operation partnered with the ACO in its MissionH24 programme.

The opening up of the category to combustion engines, plus Toyota’s interest, is likely to change that. Ex-FIA technical director Bernard Niclot, now a consultant on the MissionH24 project, tacitly confirmed that this would no longer be possible and conceded that it would be difficult to progress the rules around a spec chassis. “It’s important that the manufacturers can really develop their car, optimising it around the technologies,” he said. “The challenge for them is so big that we must let them have all the chance to do it, to achieve it.”

GARY WATKINS

P18 LE MANS ACTION

Alpine launches preview of A424 with testing due soon

WEC

Alpine has taken the wraps off the new LMDh prototype that will join the World Endurance Championship next year. Or rather the Renault marque has given the world a glimpse of what the car that will take on Ferrari, Toyota *et al* will look like.

The LMDh unveiled on Friday of Le Mans week and dubbed the A424 Beta was a show car and not the real thing. That accounts for the suffix commonly used for pre-releases in the software industry. The first bespoke Alpine prototype since the A443 open-top Group 6 car of 1978 – as opposed to a rebadged ORECA LMP2 or P1 design – will be known simply as the A424.

The first LMDh is in build at present and is due for a fire-up this month. A roll-out will follow in July at Lurcy-Levis, followed by the start of testing proper in August at Paul Ricard in the hands of the factory Signatech team, which will run a pair of A424s in next year’s WEC. A first endurance simulation is pencilled in for Motorland Aragon in November.

Alpine has maintained the three-digit nomenclature starting with ‘4’ of previous prototypes. This stretches back to the two-litre A440 introduced in 1973 and continued through to 1978 and the Le Mans 24 Hours-winning A442B plus the A443, and then the line of badge-engineered ORECAs run by Signatech since 2013.

Alpine boss Laurent Rossi, who was absent from the launch for personal reasons, called the A424 Beta a “racy, elegant and distinctive design that embodies both our present and our future”. “This project has been a



JULIEN DELFOSSE / DPPI

Signatech chief Philippe Sinault will run the LMDh programme

tremendous human adventure for nearly two years, promoting our ambitions beyond the race track,” he continued. “Our staff and partners are working tirelessly to ensure that the car is a resounding success. It is already one visually, and we are working hard to ensure it will also be a sporting success from next year.”

The key piece of information released at Friday’s launch was the specification of the engine. Alpine has confirmed that its technical partner is Mecachrome, which has long-standing links with Renault in motorsport.

Officially the engine has been developed at the Viry-Chatillon facility where the Renault F1 powertrain department is based. But it is known that it has its roots in the Mecachrome 3.4-litre V6 that provides the power in the FIA’s Formula 2 and 3 single-seater feeder series. The LMDh engine will run a single turbocharger, as it does in F2 and when it ran briefly in LMP1 in the back of the Ginetta G60-LT-P1 during the 2018-19 WEC superseason.

GARY WATKINS



JOAO FILIPE / DPPI



United switches to IMSA as WEC axes LMP2 division

WEC/IMSA

The United Autosports World Endurance Championship LMP2 squad will switch over to the IMSA SportsCar Championship next season. A move that has been in the planning for some time was belatedly announced in the wake of confirmation last week that there will be no room in the WEC for the secondary prototype class as Hypercar continues to expand.

United boss Richard Dean revealed that there will be a “redirection of our entire WEC team for the foreseeable future”. He expressed disappointment that a class won by his team in 2019-20 was disappearing, but said that he understood the reasons.

But the end of P2 in the WEC has also given United “the necessary kick up the backside” to fulfil a long-held ambition to race full time in IMSA. “It’s easy for us to say that we have always wanted to do a full season in IMSA right now, but it’s true,” said Dean. “We’ve done a lot of races on and off in IMSA over the years and looked at how we might do a full season, but for whatever reason it wasn’t possible. Now there’s going to be no P2 in WEC, it’s given the impetus to finally do it.”

United, which is co-owned by McLaren Racing boss Zak Brown, has significant history in IMSA since its first appearance as a team in its own right with a Ligier-Gibson JSP217 at the 2018 Daytona 24 Hours. There have been a further seven appearances since, most recently at the Daytona and Sebring enduros in 2022.

No drivers have been signed for the United IMSA seats so far: Dean said it was important “to get the news out there” to publicise that the team will be racing Stateside in 2024.

United will continue to compete in the European and Asian Le Mans Series next year and also plans to enter two cars at the 2024 Le Mans 24 Hours. WEC promoter and Le Mans organiser the Automobile Club de l’Ouest reiterated its commitment to P2 on the announcement of the axing of the class from the WEC at its traditional press conference on the Friday of Le Mans week, and stated that there will be a minimum of 15 grid slots reserved for the class at the 24 Hours next year.

“We have had to make some tough decisions, but LMP2 remains a very important category for us,” said ACO president Pierre Fillon. “That’s why there will be at least 15 places for LMP2 cars at Le Mans.”

The WEC will become a two-class championship next year with just Hypercar and the new LMGT3 category, which is taking over from GTE Am. There has been no commitment yet on how many grid spots LMGT3 will be given.

The Asian LMS will expand by one race next year with the addition of a double-header at Sepang in Malaysia in December. It will join the back-to-back races in Dubai and Abu Dhabi in February that have made up the series over the past three years. Dubai will host only a single race, making the 2024 ALMS a five-race series.

GARY WATKINS

Kobayashi in NASCAR debut

NASCAR

One-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Kamui Kobayashi says that his NASCAR Cup debut at the Indianapolis road course in August will be the realisation of a childhood “dream”. It was announced last week at Le Mans that Kobayashi, the team principal of Toyota’s World Endurance Championship squad, will link up with 23XI Racing to drive a Camry alongside regulars Bubba Wallace and Daniel Suarez and become the first Japanese to start a Cup race since Hideo Fukuyama in 2003.

Kobayashi joined Toyota Racing Development USA president David Wilson on stage for the launch, and revealed that he “was for a long time” searching for the right opportunity to try stock cars because the first racing he remembers seeing on TV was NASCAR.

“When I was like four or five years old. I said, ‘Wow, that’s cool!’” the two-time WEC champion said. “And the first time when I raced a go-kart, honestly I didn’t know Formula 1. What I saw when I was really young was a NASCAR race. It was an oval, and I remember thinking one day to race in NASCAR was my dream.”

This continued after his F1 career concluded in 2014. Wilson explained that they had “been working on this assignment for a couple of years”, and that Kobayashi had completed a simulator try-out on the virtual Bristol oval.

“I always keep saying, ‘I want to try’ and finally [we] made it happen,” Kobayashi added. The Indianapolis round was chosen due to difficulties in finding an event that didn’t clash with his commitments in WEC and in Super Formula for KCMG.

JAMES NEWBOLD



Proton to field new GT3 Mustang team



WEC

Ford has unveiled the definitive GT3-spec Ford Mustang and named Proton Competition as its partner team in the new LMGT3 class of the World Endurance Championship.

The official launch of the car, announced back in January 2022, took place on Friday in the so-called Village at Le Mans on the

eve of last weekend's 24 Hours. Simply known as the Ford Mustang GT3, it was shown in a special colour scheme created by livery specialist Troy Lee.

The car is based on the seventh-generation Mustang Dark Horse model and is powered by a 5.4-litre Ford Coyote V8. Development of the GT3 racer has been led by long-time Ford partner Multimatic Motorsports, while M-Sport in the UK has

been in charge of the engine programme.

Long-time Porsche team Proton is the first customer of the car to be announced and is planning to run two Mustangs in the WEC next year. The entry is subject to Ford being selected for entries in what will be a limited field. Multimatic will run a factory squad in the GT Daytona Pro class in the IMSA SportsCar Championship in 2024.

GARY WATKINS

Jani takes final slot at Porsche privateer squad

WEC/IMSA

Former Porsche factory driver Neel Jani is to return to the wheel of the German manufacturer's prototype machinery for the first time since 2017. The 2016 Le Mans 24 Hours winner is joining up with the Proton Competition squad to race both its 963 LMDhs over the remainder of this season.

Jani, who left Porsche at the end of last year, will be teamed with Gianmaria Bruni and Harry Tincknell in the

remaining rounds of the 2023 World Endurance Championship, starting at Monza on 9 July. The 39-year-old Swiss will also join them for the IMSA SportsCar Championship finale at Road Atlanta, the 10-hour Petit Le Mans fixture, in mid-October.

"Obviously getting back in the top class is what I've been aiming for," said Jani. "I'm really looking forward to getting out there with Gimmi and Harry."

Jani, who won the WEC title in 2016, remained on Porsche's books through the development



year of the 963 in 2022.

He was part of the simulator programme in 2021 but never tested the LMDh car on track.

Proton is expected to receive the 963 it will race in the WEC

in the immediate wake of the Le Mans 24 Hours. Its IMSA car is due to race for the first time at Road America in early August with Bruni and Tincknell.

GARY WATKINS

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Imola steps in to take Italian World Enduro fixture

WEC

Imola will join the World Endurance Championship for the first time as part of an expanded eight-race schedule in 2024. The home of the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix has been announced as a replacement for the Monza round along with the confirmation of the return of Austin and Interlagos to the schedule.

Imola’s place on the calendar has been precipitated by the requirement to move the Italian round of the WEC from the July date Monza will have occupied between 2021 and 2023. The shift is necessary to accommodate an extra race outside Europe as the series moves from seven races back to its traditional pre-COVID eight rounds.

Monza is unable to host the WEC in April because the track will be undergoing scheduled works at that time.

Imola’s six-hour fixture fits into the calendar on 21 April between the Qatar season-opener announced last December and the traditional Spa fixture, which next year moves back to the second weekend of May. The track is well known to Le Mans Endurance Management, the company wholly owned by WEC promoter the Automobile Club de l’Ouest that runs the series. Imola hosted a round in 2011 of the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup that spawned the WEC, and was on the European Le Mans Series calendar from 2013-16.

The circuit was scheduled to host an ELMS round in May of this year, but the

race was cancelled as a result of ongoing building works in the paddock.

The Interlagos venue in Sao Paulo returns to the calendar for the first time since 2014, though it was due to host a race in 2020 before a late cancellation. The six-hour Brazilian fixture effectively replaces this year’s Portimao round and is scheduled for 14 July at the start of the post-Le Mans leg of the WEC outside Europe.

Austin replaces Sebring after the end of the five-year deal for the WEC to join the bill of the 12-hour IMSA SportsCar Championship fixture. It was the late stand-in for the cancelled Interlagos race and previously held the North American date between 2013 and 2017.

GARY WATKINS

Global survey launched for sportscar aficionados



WEC

The Automobile Club de l’Ouest, World Endurance Championship promoter Le Mans Endurance Management and Autosport parent company Motorsport Network have launched a Global FIA WEC Fan Survey.

The survey operates in 11 languages across Motorsport Network’s motorsport.com website, with data analysis from Iris Sport. It follows

an initial FIA WEC survey from 2017.

In addition to identifying favourite drivers, teams and tracks, the survey aims to gather input on a wide range of topics, including viewing habits, live race attendance and media consumption; opinions about future changes to improve the sport, and insights into key issues beyond the race track.

Motorsport Network president James Allen said:

“FIA WEC and its iconic 24 Hours of Le Mans race are one of the world’s most enduring sporting challenges. We have data from the last survey in 2017, but so much has changed since then and we are now at the start of what promises to be an exciting era for endurance racing with the amazing Hypercars.”

Go to <https://fiawec-global-fan-survey-2023.motorsportnetwork.com/>



Key (left) will be replacing
Monchaux (right) at Sauber

Key role opens up at Sauber

FORMULA 1

The Alfa Romeo-branded Sauber Formula 1 team has hired James Key as its new technical director, meaning a reuniting for the Brit, who was recently given the boot by McLaren, with team CEO Andreas Seidl.

After ex-McLaren team principal Seidl was lured back to Hinwil ready for Audi's impending takeover, successor Andrea Stella completed a thorough review of the 'Working squad' structure to rectify a poor adaption to the ground effect era. Key was shown the door and replaced by three co-technical chiefs. But the ex-Toro Rosso figurehead has fallen on his feet and now returns to the team where he served as technical boss from 2010 to 2012 before joining Toro Rosso.

"James's appointment is a crucial step on this journey," said Seidl. "He has an outstanding amount of experience in the sport, not just as technical director, but also

in various other roles within the technical organisation of a team. He will lead the transformation process of the technical side of the team, giving us the tools and direction we need to tackle the future."

Key will join on 1 September, taking over the role from Jan Monchaux, who is now on gardening leave. He said: "There is a huge amount of work ahead of us, but I am confident that every single member of our team working in Hinwil will have the commitment, determination and hunger to get us to the top.

"We know it will require time, effort and perseverance, and the dividends from this work will only arrive over the next two seasons and beyond, but we have a journey ahead of us and a roadmap to follow which I am eager to get started. I am grateful to Andreas for the confidence he has placed in me and look forward to repaying his trust and working closely with him."

MATT KEW

KYALAMI F1 RETURN HITS SKIDS FOR 2024

FORMULA 1

The restoration of the South African Grand Prix to the Formula 1 calendar in time for 2024 is now highly unlikely, although there is an outside chance of a return to Kyalami for the following season.

The event hasn't been held since 1993 (below), and now a planned comeback for next term has been dealt a major blow. Ostensibly, this is because championship bosses reckon the current proposal is unsustainable and could collapse before any contracted term fully elapses.

But this breakdown also comes amid accusations from the US ambassador to South Africa that the country has supplied arms to Russia, with which it maintains a 'warm' political relationship. F1 terminated the Russian GP contract last year following the invasion of Ukraine. Autosport understands F1 will consider another revival for 2025.

At least the collapse of a South African GP should pave the way for Spa to receive another one-year extension. The Belgian venue already gained a bonus berth for 2023 – and will almost certainly again in 2024 – due to the unsteady prospects surrounding Kyalami's top-flight future.

MATT KEW



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F1 chiefs open door to weightwatchers

FORMULA 1

Formula 1 chiefs want the cars to go on a crash diet for the next rules era beginning in 2026. While the new engine regulations have been thrashed out and will ditch the complex and expensive Motor Generator Unit – Heat, the chassis concept is still up for discussion. The FIA, F1's commercial rights holders and drivers are pushing to ditch the pounds.

The current breed of machinery tips the scales at 798kg. That's a 200kg rise since 2008. The 2014 introduction of turbo hybrid engines created a hike to 691kg before the 2017 advent of 'wide cars' and the addition of the halo bumped the bulk to 740kg.

Speaking exclusively to

Autosport, FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem said: "One thing I would like to see is very clear, we need a lighter car. I believe this is better. I come from motorsport, where lighter cars are safer, and they won't use the same amount of fuel. It will be hard to achieve, but everybody wants it. So, I am pushing because I come from rallying, where nothing is worse than having a heavy car."

F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali backed this up, saying. "One of the points that has always been a debate has been the weight. With the hybrid engines, with the batteries, the weight is getting higher and that is something that is not really in the nature of F1."

The agreement of Ben Sulayem and Domenicali over car weight being something



that F1 needs to address will be welcome news to drivers, who have long complained about the issue. Mercedes star George Russell, who is a director of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association, said that heavy cars had started to prompt some safety concerns. He reckoned: "The weight is

extraordinary. At the moment, the low-speed performance is not great. We keep making these cars safer and safer, but obviously the heavier you make them, when you have an impact it's like crashing with a bus compared to a Smart Car."

JONATHAN NOBLE

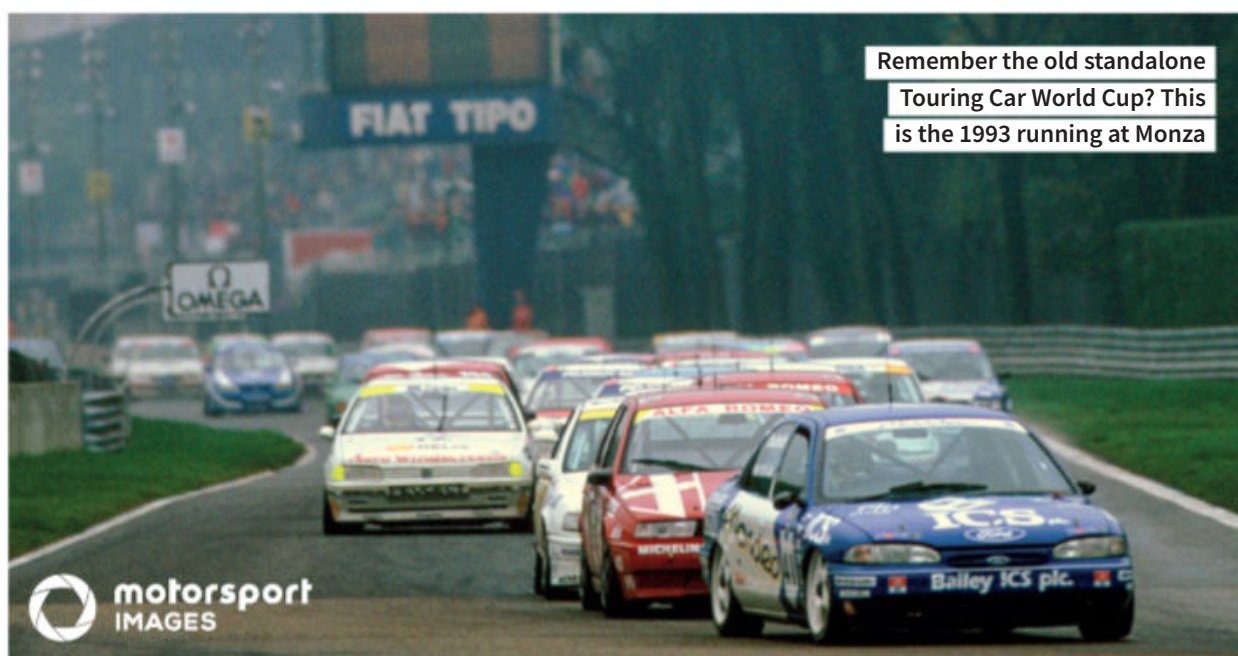
TCR in talks for World Cup status for final

TCR

The TCR organisation is in talks to restore FIA status to a number of its disciplines next year, and is hoping that its final could be run with the title of FIA World Touring Car Cup.

The event is set to take place in January 2024, with the top drivers from the TCR World Tour competing against other TCR series' top drivers according to the category's ranking platform. There is also the potential for the World Tour, which this year effectively replaced the FIA World Touring Car Cup, to run under an FIA banner.

"We're discussing with the FIA at the moment," said TCR president Marcello Lotti. "Both sides are interested to find a collaboration for next season in terms of the TCR World Tour and the final. This is what I can say right now. It's probably a couple of months around the table to find a solution, but both sides are interested, and that's a very good sign."



The TCR organisation is also looking at options to relaunch its ETCR electric touring car project, which ran as the FIA ETCR eTouring Car World Cup last year promoted by Discovery. It stopped for this season when Discovery announced that "the necessary conditions" could not be met to continue with the category, which was won by Adrien Tambay and Cupra in 2022.

The promoter had already shuttered WTCR, with problems finding sustainable commercial partnerships cited as the reason.

"It was impossible to react like we did to

create the TCR World Tour with ETCR when Discovery made its announcement, as ETCR is not as simple as the TCR platform," said Lotti. "So we decided to create a roadmap working with the FIA first. We've had a first meeting and we have another at the end of June with the manufacturers already involved. We'll then meet with manufacturers who are interested in July, and by September we'll probably be in a position to announce something with the stakeholders."

NEIL HUDSON



TCR AUSTRALIA Australia-based Brit Tom Oliphant scored his first victory since the June 2021 Brands Hatch BTCC round when he triumphed in the TCR Australia reversed-grid race last weekend at Winton. With his Lynk & Co developing an issue in testing, Oliphant was forced back into the Ashley Seward Motorsport Alfa Romeo with which he started the season. Tenth in race one gave him reversed-grid pole, and he led all the way. Oliphant is sixth in the points, while Hyundai driver Bailey Sweeny, who won the finale at Winton, tops the table. **Photo by Daniel Kalisz**

Hunter-Reay replaces Daly

INDYCAR

Ryan Hunter-Reay, the 2014 Indy 500 winner and 2012 IndyCar champion, has replaced Conor Daly at Ed Carpenter Racing from this weekend's round at Road America.

Hunter-Reay was a full-time driver in the IndyCar Series until he lost his Andretti Autosport drive to Romain Grosjean last year, and finished 11th in a one-off start for Dreyer & Reinbold Racing in the 500 last month. He now slots in at the Chevrolet-powered ECR team alongside Rinus VeeKay.

"I was surprised when I got the call from Ed," said Hunter-Reay. "He described how frustrated he was that his team has not been able to realise its potential despite their efforts, investments, as well as technical and personnel changes over the past few years and asked for my help."

Carpenter added: "We need to improve our competitiveness and I wanted to add a fresh perspective from a driver like Ryan, who has a massive amount of experience and success as well as a reputation as a team leader. We have worked together in the past as team-mates and he tested for ECR at Barber Motorsports Park in October 2021, where he made an immediate impact as we were able to qualify one of our cars on the pole [VeeKay in 2022] following that test."



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Daly, whose best result in 2023 is eighth in the Indy 500 but whose next best is a 14th at St Petersburg, said: "Although we've mutually decided that it's in our best interests to take different paths, I'd like to thank Ed Carpenter Racing for the past three and a half seasons."

The 31-year-old Daly will be active this weekend, but not in what you might expect... He will drive for Dreyer & Reinbold in the opening Nitrocross round at MidAmerica Outdoors in Jay, Oklahoma!

CHARLES BRADLEY

IN THE HEADLINES

CAN-AM TO AUSTRIAN GP

Red Bull motorsport supremo and ex-BRM F1 racer Helmut Marko is to drive Hepworth International's ex-Rodriguez BRM-Chevrolet P154 as part of a Can-Am demonstration at next month's Austrian Grand Prix. McLarens will be in the hands of Juan Pablo Montoya, Jos Verstappen, David Coulthard and Alexander Wurz, with Mark Webber in a Lola T165.

SCHUMACHER IN MERCEDES

Mick Schumacher got his hands on the Mercedes W14 Formula 1 car last week during a Pirelli tyre test at Barcelona. Schumacher, the team's reserve, completed 152 laps on the second of two days of testing. George Russell drove on the first day, while Ferrari was also present with Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz sharing duties. All testing was carried out on rubber that had not been pre-heated as a ban on tyre blankets is weighed up for 2024.

GREEN ON THE PODIUM

German-based Brit Ben Green kicked off the ADAC GT Masters season with a second at Hockenheim last weekend. Green took over the Schubert Motorsport BMW M4 GT3 started by Filipino ex-British F4 racer Eduardo Coseteng and climbed to second, with Huber Porsche pair Jaxon Evans and Tim Zimmermann victorious. Green and Coseteng were fourth in race two, won by the Joos Porsche of Sven Muller and Finn Gehrsitz after the leading Mercedes started by Arjun Maini copped a penalty for a pitstop infringement. With the series switching to a pro-am format amid ADAC's takeover of the DTM, the field has been slashed to 11 cars.

HANKEY CLEANS UP

Greystone GT pair Euan Hankey and Mark Hopton took a double victory in the recent inaugural round of the GT4 Artura-based McLaren Trophy at Paul Ricard (below). Fellow Brit Charlie Hollings chased Hankey home in the first of the two races.

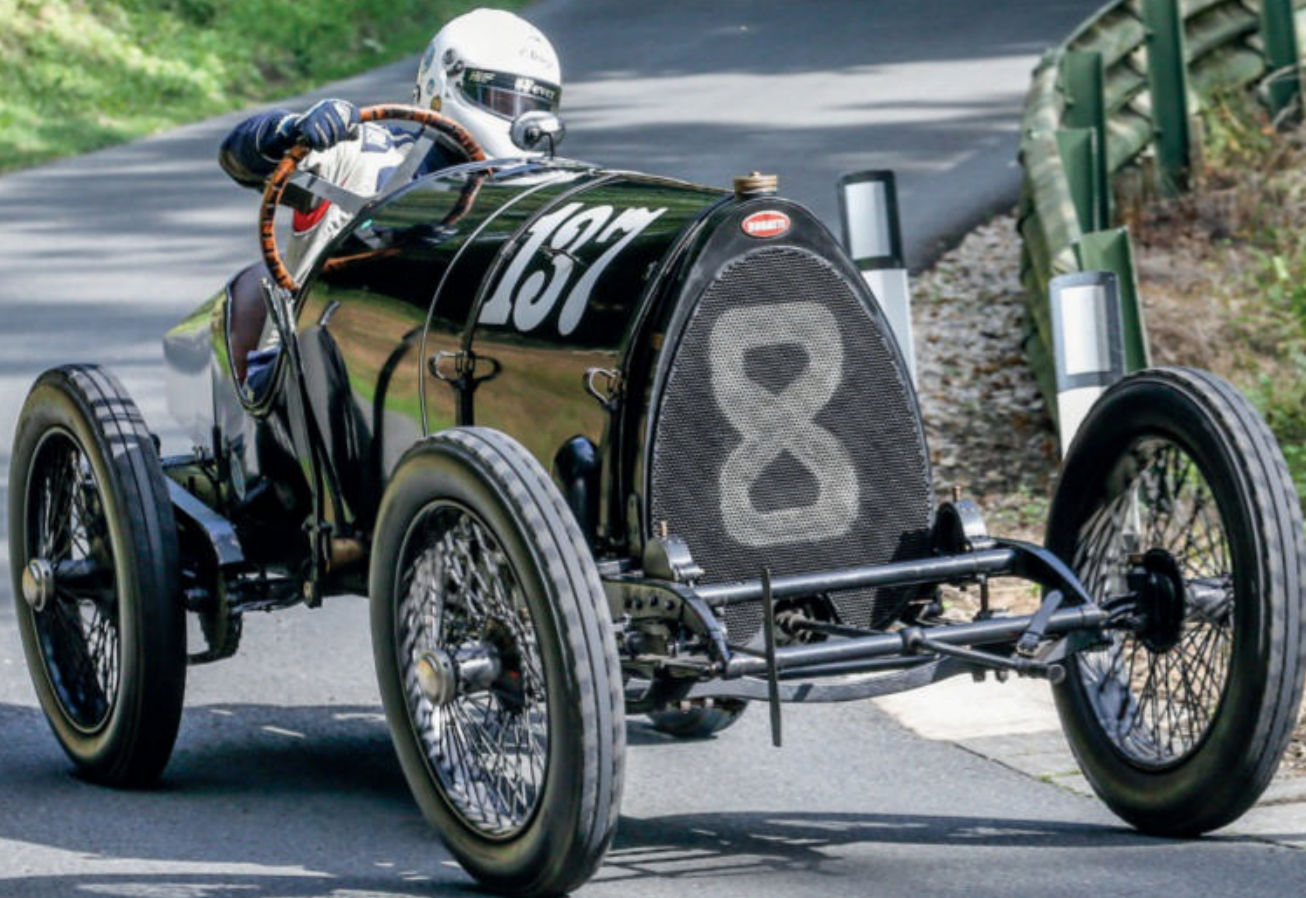


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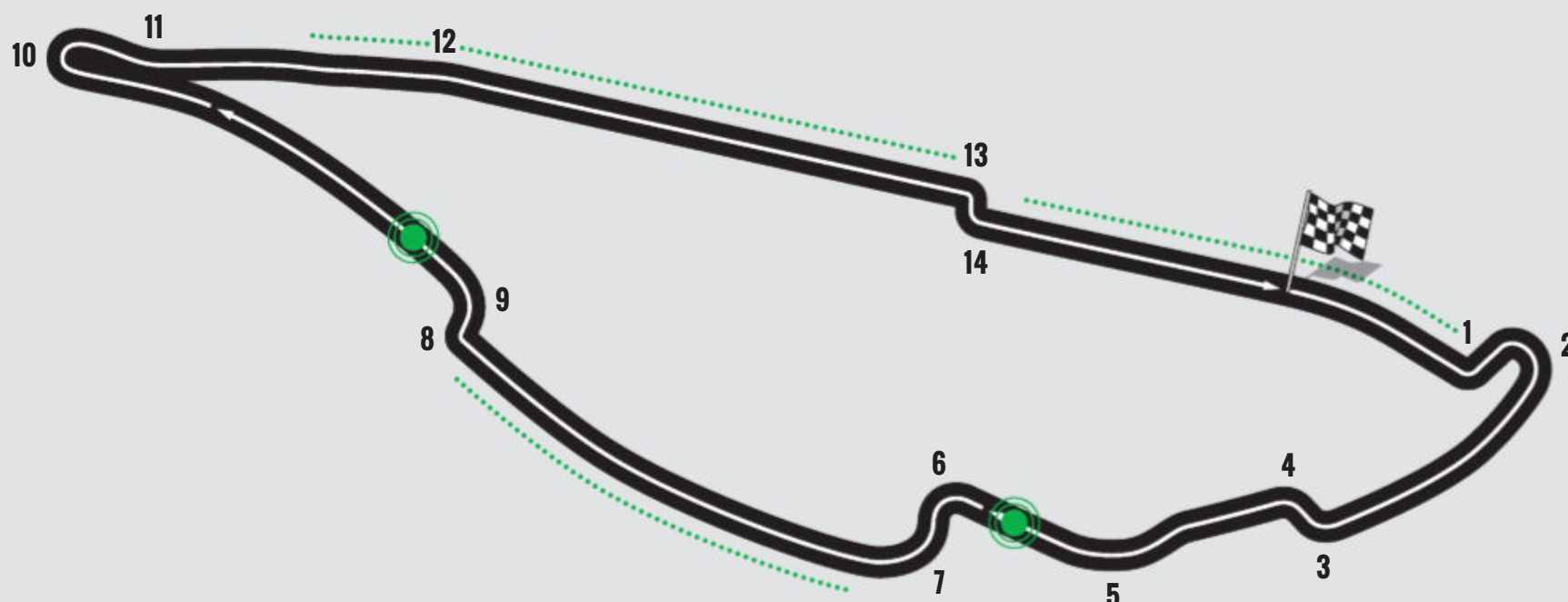
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F1 CANADIAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



Montreal
Length 2.710 miles
Number of laps 70

DRS detection
 DRS zone



UK START TIMES

Friday 16 June
FP1 1830 FP2 2200

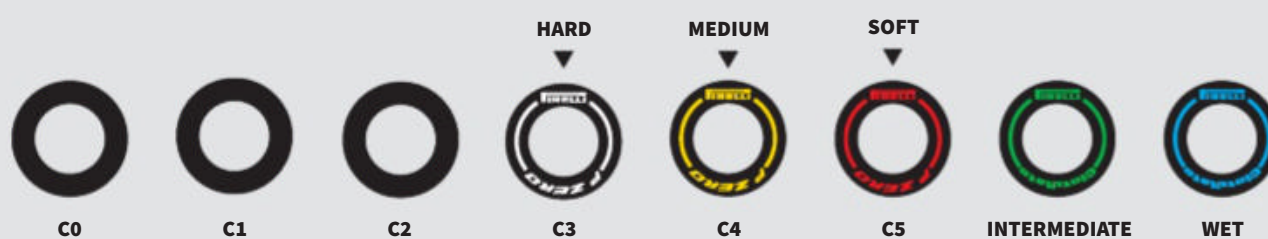
Saturday 17 June
FP3 1730
QUALIFYING 2100

Sunday 18 June
RACE 1900

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TV Highlights
CHANNEL 4 2330

TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	Verstappen	170
2	Perez	117
3	Alonso	99
4	Hamilton	87
5	Russell	65

Constructors

1	Red Bull	287
2	Mercedes	152
3	Aston Martin	134
4	Ferrari	100
5	Alpine	40



MONTREAL STATS

Previous winners

2022	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2019	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2018	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2017	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2014	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull
2013	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2012	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren
2011	Jenson Button	McLaren

2022 POLE POSITION

Max Verstappen
1m21.299s

POLE LAP RECORD

Sebastian Vettel
1m10.240s (2019)

RACE LAP RECORD

Valtteri Bottas
1m13.078s (2019)



Laps led

Michael Schumacher	433
Lewis Hamilton	354
Sebastian Vettel	311
Ayrton Senna	185
Nelson Piquet	154
Nigel Mansell	131
Fernando Alonso	103
Alain Prost	90
Rene Arnoux	73
Ralf Schumacher	72



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Verstappen at his least aggressive?

Red Bull's car is so good that the world champion can take a far less combative approach to his racing. At least that's what one of his F1 rivals reckons

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

It's too early to say. If we get into next year and they're dominating again, then yes." That was the start of Lewis Hamilton's reply when asked if he believed that Formula 1 was now in the 'Max Verstappen era'. Based on the evidence of 2023 so far, and with the weight of Hamilton's words — carefully chosen, seemingly uttered with an air of frustration but not bitterness based on the atmosphere in the room after the 2022 US Grand Prix — it can be said that F1 is now firmly into the Verstappen age.

The Dutchman has five wins from the opening seven rounds this term and has clearly seen off team-mate Sergio Perez's faint hopes of making a 2023 title fight, with Verstappen's points lead already at 53. F1 is now heading to this weekend's Canadian GP, where Red Bull can secure its 100th victory in the category. A fine achievement from a relatively young team.

There will be a secondary focus in the chase behind. Namely, whether Mercedes can repeat its Barcelona form and head Aston Martin and Ferrari in the Red Bull wake, or even if it can put any pressure on the dominant squad at a track where Hamilton is superb.

If Mercedes can make good on its promise from last time out over the rest of this campaign, that will raise hopes of a renewed title battle coming in 2024. F1 wants, and really needs, a repeat of the fireworks it got the last time the Black Arrows and Red Bull battled things out in 2021. Ferrari started the new era so well, but has

“Off track, we can see now that he occasionally exercises his considerable power ruthlessly”

regressed to the point where its brilliant Le Mans victory (with the late pre-race Balance of Performance change of course withstanding as a potentially pivotal factor in Toyota's defeat) is being amusingly referenced against the inadequacies of its F1 division. But if Mercedes can't supply a title fight and Aston cannot make further progress towards the front, then F1 is left with the reality that the Verstappen era may well last until the next rules reset in 2026. We're already approaching the halfway point to then, so this serves as a handy moment to assess Verstappen's run so far.

Off track, we can see now that Verstappen occasionally exercises his considerable power ruthlessly, such as enacting a ban on Sky Sports following actually rather innocuous comments regarding Hamilton's feelings on the 2021 title outcome from reporter Ted Kravitz. He followed that up with his refusal to comply with team

orders to help Perez in the 2022 Brazilian GP. Most recently, with the caveat of adrenalin and unexpected camera closeness considered, his reaction to George Russell's minor contact in the Baku sprint race was rather unworthy of a world champion, commanding the attention of many young and impressionable fans.

This is balanced against a remarkable forthrightness on important issues that capture Verstappen's attentions, as it does the rest of the F1 paddock and those who are watching on. An example is reaction to the new sprint format tweaks for 2023, where his comments chimed with many — including this writer — that F1's weekend format is already special and working, if demanding.

On track, matters naturally take on a different focus since that's where the real excitement lies. And Verstappen's driving is back in the spotlight following two recent developments. Chronologically, these are: Russell saying the following to Autosport in Spain, and then Verstappen's move on Ferrari's Carlos Sainz at the first corner of the Barcelona race three days later. "Max is probably less aggressive than he's ever been in the past because he's not in a position that he needs to be aggressive," Russell said in response to a question regarding Verstappen's view — expressed at the end of 2022 — that he fights differently with Hamilton because he has a long history of racing against drivers of F1's current younger generation.

So, is that an accurate assessment? Given how 2023 is so far so different from the first two years of the Verstappen era, we can focus on Russell's comment with races from this year alone in mind. Based on how Verstappen came through the field so calmly in Miami, and didn't chop or chomp at either of the Mercedes drivers at the start in Melbourne — where actually Hamilton made a more belligerent move at the second braking zone — you can appreciate Russell's view.

But Verstappen's actions at Turn 1 at Barcelona were very different. They evoked memories of his own 'do-or-die' lunge against Hamilton at the same spot two years earlier, and of his aggressive defence against Mick Schumacher's Haas at Silverstone last year. Given that was over seventh place, and in Spain last time out Sainz was always set to be easy prey considering Ferrari's ongoing tyre management fallibility, it all felt rather needless.

But the Sainz move — very firm but fair — demonstrates that Verstappen still has that ultra-aggression in his armoury to deploy as he sees fit, even with Red Bull's current massive car advantage. That's hardly surprising given he has proved he's just as hungry for more success, even after reaching world champion and now F1 dominator status.

Now, to make things interesting over the long haul once again, F1 just needs his competition to step up and compel him to use his much-discussed aggressive tactics as thrillingly — although ideally not as controversially — as in 2021 for the rest of the Verstappen era. 🌪



THE RACER

Pit talk from the HRDC



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LE MANS

100
YEARS

LE MANS IN PICS

Before the 62 entries started their challenge, they took part in the traditional line-up last week

[P18 REPORT](#)



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motorsport
IMAGES

1984-85 Porsche 956



1950 Cadillac Spider 'Le Monstre'



1935 Lagonda M45 Rapide



LE MANS LEGENDS As part of the centenary celebrations, an array of legendary Le Mans machinery was displayed. This is just a small selection! Nine-time winner Tom Kristensen was also on hand to chauffeur the special trophy. **Photos by JEP**

LE MANS
100
YEARS



HYPERCAR

LMP2

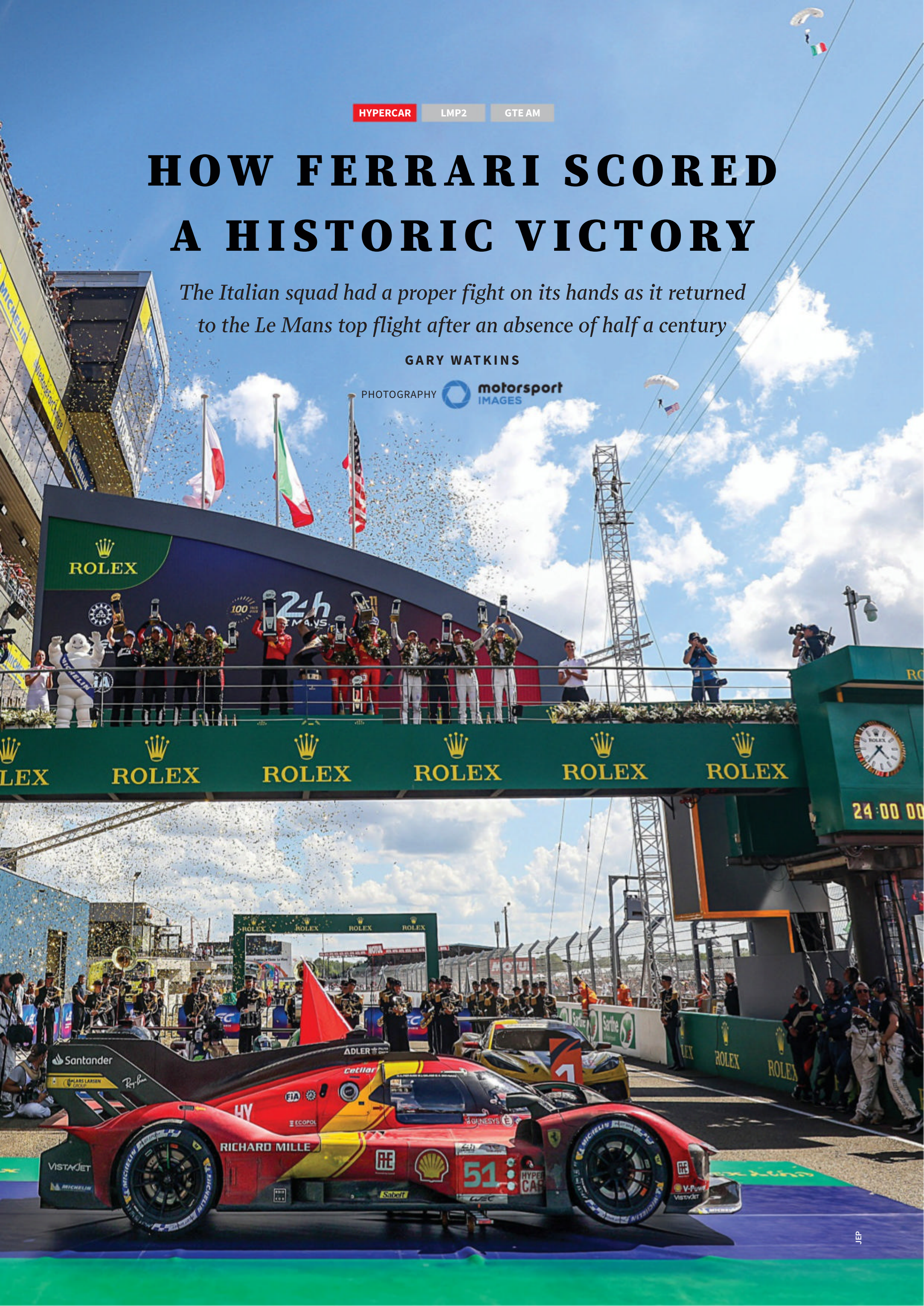
GTE AM

HOW FERRARI SCORED A HISTORIC VICTORY

The Italian squad had a proper fight on its hands as it returned to the Le Mans top flight after an absence of half a century

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY



HYPERCAR RACE PACE		
AVERAGE OF TOP 10 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Antonio Fuoco (#50)	3m27.509s
2	Brendon Hartley (#8)	3m28.138s
3	Nicklas Nielsen (#50)	3m28.184s
4	James Calado (#51)	3m28.459s
5	Miguel Molina (#50)	3m28.554s
6	Frederic Makowiecki (#5)	3m28.635s
AVERAGE OF TOP 30 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Antonio Fuoco (#50)	3m28.479s
2	Brendon Hartley (#8)	3m29.166s
3	James Calado (#51)	3m29.321s
4	Antonio Giovinazzi (#51)	3m29.335s
5	Frederic Makowiecki (#5)	3m29.469s
6	Nicklas Nielsen (#50)	3m29.524s
AVERAGE OF TOP 50 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Antonio Fuoco (#50)	3m29.102s
2	Antonio Giovinazzi (#51)	3m29.881s
3	Brendon Hartley (#8)	3m30.044s
4	James Calado (#51)	3m30.090s
5	Sebastien Bourdais (#3)	3m30.305s
6	Laurens Vanthoor (#6)	3m30.442s



Could there have been a better result at the end of the centenary running of the Le Mans 24 Hours? Not one that would have made the headlines in quite the same way all over the world. Ferrari did the business at the first time of asking at the French enduro with its new 499P Le Mans Hypercar after a factory absence from the prototype ranks spanning 50 years. Better still, Alessandro Pier Guidi, James Calado and Antonio Giovinazzi prevailed at the end of a sometimes thrilling battle with the best of the Toyotas.

The #51 Ferrari beat the #8 Toyota GR010 HYBRID LMH driven by Sebastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirakawa by a shade over 80 seconds at the end of an incident-packed race of attrition affected by two rain storms, three safety cars of the real kind, and five of the virtual variety known as Full Course Yellows. The Italian manufacturer looked well set on Sunday morning to take a first overall Le Mans victory since 1965. But Le Mans, as ever, provided some late jeopardy.

Toyota, bidding for a sixth Le Mans victory in a row, came back into the picture late in hour 18. The GR010 was trailing the 499P by a minute and appeared to lack the pace to do anything about that deficit, but suddenly the race came alive. The Toyota started to become a more competitive proposition as the temperatures rose and an electronic glitch cost the Ferrari a minute in the pits.

Buemi found himself with a lead of a couple of seconds. He was behind in the space of four laps, Pier Guidi sweeping around the outside into the second chicane on the Mulsanne, but the balance between the two cars was shifting ever so slightly. Hartley was asked to extend his stint behind the wheel from a triple to quadruple with two and a half hours to go and was given a new



set of Michelin's medium-compound slick. Inroads started to be made into Calado's advantage.

Fifteen or so seconds quickly became nine as Hartley chased down the Ferrari. Neither car took tyres at its next stop when Hirakawa replaced Hartley. The young Japanese was told it was time for what his Kiwi team-mate described as "maximum attack". Three laps later, Hirakawa locked up in the braking area for the tight Arnage right-hander, the #8 Toyota sustaining front and rear body damage as it fishtailed into the barriers. The two-minute stop for repairs put him more than three minutes in arrears of the Ferrari. The battle for the race was over.

There was one final turn to a race that had been led by all five of the manufacturers competing in the Hypercar class, but Toyota was not in a position to twist the knife. The electronic glitch that had delayed Pier Guidi earlier returned at the car's final pitstop



“A kind of loss of communication between the systems in the car forced us to make a power cycle”

with just under 25 minutes left on the clock. This time, driver, Ferrari’s engineers and the AF team were on top of the problem faster. Only 30s were lost as Pier Guidi went through the power-cycle necessary to reboot the car’s systems. The question was: would the Toyota have been able to take advantage had Hirakawa not gone off? The answer to that one can never be known.

“We knew that the track conditions were coming to us, according to our data,” said Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director Pascal Vasselon. “We will never know, but for sure our competitiveness was improving.”

Those extra seconds spent in the pits by Pier Guidi were the last in a series of heart-in-the-mouth moments for Ferrari as it belied its second-favourite status for round four of the World Endurance Championship, even with the pre-race Balance of Performance change that had hit Toyota hardest.

Calado put his head in his hands, but Ferrari’s sportscar racing technical boss Ferdinando Cannizzo insisted that the team wasn’t too worried. At least not this time. “There was a kind of loss of communication between the systems in the car, so we were forced to make a power cycle,” he explained. “The first time we were ▶

PEUGEOT

THE 9X8 IS IN A ‘HAPPIER PLACE’

It might be overplaying it to suggest that Peugeot was the revelation of Le Mans 2023, but its pace and perhaps also reliability must be considered a surprise for a manufacturer that has consistently underperformed since joining the WEC last season. The avant-garde 9X8 Le Mans Hypercar led the race, was ensconced in the top three for much of its first 12 hours, and looked good for a top five at lunchtime on Sunday.

No one would have predicted that, even after the Peugeot LMH looked strong in the opening sessions of the Test Day and the meeting proper, ending up six tenths off each time. That form wasn’t repeated in qualifying, but the drivers were insistent that improvement had been made since an abject display the previous time out in the WEC at Spa in April.

Jean-Eric Vergne reckoned the 9X8 was in a “happier place” around the Circuit de la Sarthe than in previous races. “Everything feels better, better in the high-speed corners, and the traction feels way better,” he explained. “We’ve worked on that because it was a clear weakness.”

The former Toro Rosso Formula 1 driver’s prediction that Peugeot would be closer to the pace in the race turned out to be true, though the headlines were not created by the #93 car he shared with Paul di Resta and Mikkel Jensen, but by #94 driven by Gustavo Menezes, Loic Duval and Nico Muller. With rain falling at the end of the third hour, Menezes propelled his Peugeot into the lead. The car would run at the front a further three times over the next seven and a bit hours, leading a total of 34 laps. More significant was the fact that #94 was rarely out of the top three in that time.

The run came to an end early in hour 12 when Menezes, running third at the time, went off at the first chicane on the Mulsanne and dropped to outside the top 20 after repairs. The sister car had lost two laps when Vergne spun behind the safety car and beached the car on the Mulsanne Corner kerbs, but still looked like it was going to get a top-five result as the race drew to a close. Both cars would hit problems in the closing stages that restricted #93 and #94 to unrepresentative eighth and 27th positions, respectively 12 and 30 laps in arrears. A front splitter and then power steering problems delayed the former, an engine problem that rendered it walking wounded at the finish the latter.

“It was a turning point; it was our best race so far,” said Peugeot Sport technical boss Olivier Janssonie. “All the work we have been doing for four years is finally paying off – we are pretty proud of that.”



surprised at what happened, so we lost a bit more time. The second time we understood and had prepared the procedure. No one was too worried.”

Long before the first electronics reset, Pier Guidi had spun at the first chicane on the Mulsanne Straight in hour nine. The Ferrari beached itself in the gravel, but the speed with which he was extricated by marshals ensured he didn’t lose a lap. The safety car that followed meant that his misdemeanour had little or no bearing on the race.

A problem for the sister car shared by Antonio Fuoco, Nicklas Nielsen and Miguel Molina shortly afterwards in hour 10 could have had a much greater effect on Ferrari’s chances because it effectively halved Ferrari’s victory bid. The #50 499P had already lost time having to go through the reboot procedure when a stone pierced the hybrid cooling system. The team had no choice but to effect a replacement of the radiator. Thirty minutes were lost and the car dropped outside the top 10, though the machine’s pace and problems for others in Hypercar allowed it to take the chequered flag in fifth position.

The delays for Fuoco levelled up the Ferrari versus Toyota battle. The Japanese manufacturer was already down to a single car after an incident indirectly linked to Pier Guidi’s off. A so-called Slow Zone where an 80km/h (50mph) speed limit and non-overtaking in virtual safety car conditions was still in force from Tertre Rouge to the first chicane on the straight (SZ3). Kamui Kobayashi had to check up dramatically to avoid passing Giedo van der Garde’s Graff Racing ORECA-Gibson 07 LMP2 in what is known as the preparatory area. He was clouted hard from behind by the JMW Motorsport Ferrari 488 GTE Evo driven by Louis Prette and with less severity by Memo Rojas in one of the Signatech team’s

Bamber, Lynn and Westbrook took a strong third for Cadillac



ORECAs. Both rear tyres were punctured and the left-rear driveshaft broken. Kobayashi had no chance of making it back to the pits.

It was a worrying time for Toyota. The #8 car that had led its charge initially had fallen back with an overheating problem. Vasselon revealed after the race that the team thought it was going to lose two cars in quick succession. “We had the engine temperature going sky high on #8,” he explained. “We had no indication of what was happening; there was nothing visible from outside.

“We decided to remove the front end, change it and have a look. There was a big piece of Kevlar. It was stuck inboard of

Polesitting #50 Ferrari had the pace – especially in Fuoco’s hands – but not the luck required



the suspension, but blocking the flow of the cooler. We could remove it and keep going.”

It wasn't the last foreign body to cause the #8 Toyota problems. Nose damage was caused in the night by impact with a rodent of not insignificant size when Hirakawa was at the wheel. The length of the tail found within the car indicated, said Vasselon, that it was (or had been) a squirrel.

The time lost by the Toyota switched positions around at the front after a purple patch for the #8 when the softest compound Michelin tyre gave it an edge over the Ferrari. That changed as the temperatures rose, before some rum luck for Buemi during a Slow Zone and the final FCY (a procedure used in the race at Le Mans for the first time, eight years on from its introduction to the WEC) handed the initiative to Ferrari.

The Ferrari was the faster car around the 8.47-mile Circuit de la Sarthe during the race just as it had been in qualifying. The drivers of the winning 499P had the better part of half a second over their rivals in the chasing GR010, though there were times when the order was the other way around. Hartley's best lap for the #8 Toyota was actually three tenths up on the fastest time from the #51 Ferrari posted by Pier Guidi. Best race lap, however, went to Fuoco during the #50 car's fightback. He was also the fastest driver on the averages, and by some margin.

The Ferrari was a consistent performer at Le Mans in a way it hadn't been in previous races since its debut in the WEC season-opener at Sebring in March. The Ferrari had been quick in qualifying but didn't look after its tyres as well as the Toyota in the first three rounds. This time the 499P was again quick over one lap in Thursday night's Hyperpole session for the fastest eight cars from opening qualifying. It blocked out the front row, Fuoco taking

the pole ahead of Pier Guidi by eight tenths, with Hartley 1.5s behind in third as best of the rest. But significantly it was able to continue that form over a stint, a double and even a triple through the 24 Hours.

It helped that the Circuit de la Sarthe is a low-degradation track. But on the other hand, a pre-event Balance of Performance change that gave Ferrari a 24kg increase in minimum weight couldn't have helped tyre life, except in its battle with Toyota – the Japanese manufacturer had received an even bigger weight hit of 37kg.

“In the races before Le Mans we suffered with tyre deg,” said Calado. “Our car is definitely still hard on tyres, but this is a low-energy track. We were able to use the soft and the medium tyres without any big deg issues.”

Vasselon made an attempt to quantify the gain those 13 fewer kilos gave Ferrari. He put what he called the “BoP effect” at 2m30s, once corrected to take into account all the interminable yellow-flag running. A new safety car procedure was in use at Le Mans for the first time that extended a couple of already long caution periods.

The 100th anniversary Le Mans was a two-horse race, but it is ►

“We had the engine temperature going sky high on #8. We had no indication of what was happening”



Sole remaining Toyota kept the pressure up until Hirakawa's late off allowed Ferrari space



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#51 Ferrari survived late scare to beat Toyota to the flag by just over 80s

not beyond the realms of possibility that another manufacturer – or even manufacturers – could have been in the fight had things gone their way. Cadillac took third place, delivering on the promise shown by its V-Series.R LMDh in the opening three rounds of the WEC despite an 11kg BoP hit.

The full-season WEC entry from the Ganassi-run Cadillac Racing entry of Earl Bamber, Alex Lynn and Richard Westbrook took the final podium spot, a lap down on the winning Ferrari. It looked as though it had the cleanest run of the three Caddys on the grid, although an engine oil problem forced it to take on a dump of lubricant at every stop with a loss of vital seconds from as early as the third hour. By Sunday morning, Bamber and co admitted they weren't pushing as hard as they might in light of the high oil consumption, in the knowledge that they had nothing for Ferrari and Toyota.

"If you add all those three seconds here and five seconds there, it's something like three minutes," said Bamber. "We made a step forward here, but it's all those small details that we need to continue to work on."

Ganassi's regular IMSA SportsCar Championship entry shared by Sebastien Bourdais, Renger van der Zande and Scott Dixon was the faster of the two cars, particularly in the hands of Bourdais. But it suffered the lion's share of the team's problems, high oil-consumption apart. Three incidents, including a punt from behind under the safety car, ultimately limited the second Ganassi entry to fourth, a further lap behind the sister car. There was also a one-minute stop/go penalty for not respecting the limitations on tyre pressures.

The Action Express Racing squad was never in contention with its V-Series.R, but it might have been. Jack Aitken crashed on the

"We made a step for here, but it's all those small details that we need to continue to work on"



JEP



opening lap of the race, the resulting damage costing 78 minutes to repairs. That dropped the car 16 laps off the race lead, and it only finished a further two laps down, one of which was accounted for by another off from Aitken.

The first-lap accident came at the wettest point of what was a mostly bone dry track at the time, Aitken confirming that he lost grip on a white line (a road marking on what was once part of the main route from Le Mans to Tours).

Porsche had a fast car at Le Mans, something helped by only a three kilo increase in minimum weight under the BoP, but not a reliable one. None of the four 963 LMDhs in Hypercar had clean runs, and two of the cars that saw the chequered flag were last-lap specials sent out in order to guarantee a classified finish.

The #5 Porsche Penske Motorsport entry crewed by Frederic Makowiecki, Dane Cameron and Michael Christensen had only one driven wheel after a late driveshaft failure, having already lost time with a sensor issue, a puncture and a cooling leak. The Jota customer car, shared by Antonio Felix da Costa, Yifei Ye and Will Stevens, spent more than three hours in its garage in the run-up to the finish. The steering rack had been damaged when da Costa was involved in an incident, and the team wanted to ensure that they got to 70% distance even after earlier stops for crash repairs and a change of FIA sensor. ►

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THE 'GARAGISTES'

GLICKENHAUS OUTLASTS SOME BIG PLAYERS

When Jim Glickenhaus pitched up in the World Endurance Championship exactly two years ago, he outlined a dream of vanquishing Ferrari on its return to the front of the grid at the Le Mans 24 Hours. It didn't come true last weekend, but he did get his two Pipo-engined 007 Le Mans Hypercars home ahead of all four Porsches on the grid. That was still some achievement for a 'garagiste' who has been so important in the Hypercar story.

The Glickenhaus Racing team added a sixth-place finish – and a seventh, too – to the fourth the 007 achieved on its Le Mans debut in 2021 and the third it notched up 12 months ago. It couldn't really have hoped for more going into the 100th anniversary Le Mans, although perhaps a place or two higher might have

been possible for its lead #708 car shared by Romain Dumas, Olivier Pla and Ryan Briscoe.

Glickenhaus wasn't on the pace in practice and qualifying, just as it hadn't been in the opening WEC rounds this year. Its two cars lined up on the grid in 12th and 14th. Reliability rather than pace would have to be the key to a decent result.

"We are absolutely happy, no complaints,"

said Luca Ciaranetti, boss of the Podium Advanced Technologies organisation that developed and runs the 007. "For a small niche manufacturer like Glickenhaus, being in among all these big-name car makers is like a dream."

The two Glickenhaus LMH machines might have finished in the top six: both were running in sixth when they spun into the barriers on Sunday

morning, Pla first and Franck Mailleux next. Both cars dropped down as a result of time lost to repairs, but the late problem for the #5 Porsche allowed #708 to return to the top six in the final hour. It was seven laps down; #709, in which Mailleux was joined by Esteban Gutierrez and Nathanael Berthon, was a further two laps in arrears.

The team didn't seem too annoyed about its

drivers' misdemeanours, pointing out that it had made mistakes of its own. The #708 car started from the pitlane – and a lap down as per the WEC regulations – after a gearbox leak was found. It was the result of finger trouble after a pre-race set-up change of the differential settings. Ditto the loss of a front wheel on #709, which also lost time when Gutierrez had an off in the rain.

The ByKolles team, now competing as Vanwall Racing, made little impact on its return to Le Mans for the first time since 2020. The Gibson-engined Vandervell 680 wasn't a match for the Glickenhaus in the battle of the garagistes. The car driven by Tom Dillmann, Esteban Guerrieri and Tristan Vautier was already 37 laps in arrears when it retired with engine failure in hour 16.



The #6 car of Laurens Vanthoor, Andre Lotterer and Kevin Estre was running cleanly in 16th position overall. It had, however, lost 40 minutes to repairs after Estre went off in the Porsche Curves lapping an LMP2, and a similar loss came with hybrid-issue gremlins culminating in a change of battery. The extra PPM car driven by Nick Tandy, Felipe Nasr and Mathieu Jaminet retired in hour seven when the fuel pressure suddenly disappeared.

That makes it sound like it was a disastrous weekend for Porsche, but the 963 continued to show the pace in the WEC first indicated by its performance in the Le Mans Test Day the weekend before the race. The #5 was right up there in the averages, while Vanthoor, Makowiecki and Christensen were the star performers across the works squad.

They were all outshone, however, by Ye in the Jota entry. The Chinese driver flew as the race came out of one of the three safety cars on a damp track in the fourth hour. He took the lead and pulled away from Molina in the #50 Ferrari, building up a 15s lead before dropping it in the Porsche Curves. There were mitigating circumstances, however. Ye was on his in-lap

“It was driver error, but we’re not giving Yifei too much stick, not least because he was flying”



and had been struggling with visibility after coming through a wet period of the race. A late turn-in at the right hander before Karting/Corvette resulted in a wheel off the drying line and a trip into the barriers.

“Visibility when the screen gets a bit dirty is a problem with this car at the moment,” said Jota boss Sam Hignett. “It was driver error, but we’re not giving Yifei too much stick, not least because he was flying.”

Urs Kuratle, 963 programme boss, admitted that it wasn’t a good weekend for Porsche. “We can’t pretend that,” he said, “but on the other hand we are getting good feedback from all the drivers that we’ve made a real improvement with the car. That validates all the work we’ve done over the past month or so with testing in Europe and America. We showed some good pace and I don’t think Ferrari and Toyota were so far out of reach.”



SHOCK LMP2 WIN DESPITE SCHERER SHENANIGANS

The Swiss driver, coping with a suspected broken foot and a non-functioning radio, went above and beyond in his efforts for Inter Europol Competition

JAMES NEWBOLD

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



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olish motorsport enjoyed its greatest day since the 2008 Canadian Grand Prix as Inter Europol Competition claimed its first World Endurance Championship victory on the biggest stage of them all: the Le Mans 24 Hours.

With a suspected broken left foot and no radio, Fabio Scherer secured a famous win together with Kuba Smiechowski and Albert Costa, confirming that the team funded by a Warsaw bakery giant is now one of LMP2's most potent forces.

The vivid ORECA-Gibson 07 had graced a WEC podium for the first time at Spa, but found another gear at the Circuit de la Sarthe. From 13th in the 24-car pack, Inter Europol emerged in the lead for the first time at the six-hour mark and went on to lead a race-high 204 laps – including the last 112 over the final seven hours.

“Hearing today the Polish anthem on the podium, it took my

breath away,” said Smiechowski, whose previous best finish in five previous Le Mans attempts was fifth in 2021. “I always thought this dream was too big but yeah, it happened. When we started the endurance project we wanted to be in Le Mans. We achieved this dream to be in Le Mans and I kind of always thought that will be it.”

But just 15 minutes in, Scherer was convinced that his day – and realistically, the team's too – was over. Inter Europol was one of the many to roll the dice under the first safety car triggered by its second entry, helmed by Mark Kvamme, spinning into the gravel at the first Mulsanne chicane on the slippery road. Scherer came in on lap three, but his left foot was struck by Nicky Catsburg's Corvette.

“I was super-lucky that the foot is still in one piece, it could have been much worse,” Scherer explained. As various treatments were applied to help alleviate the swelling, Inter Europol changed its



IDEC Sport polesitter Chatin leads at the start – sixth-place finish was far from hoped-for result



TRIENITZ/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Big day for Polish motorsport thanks to Smiechowski, Scherer and Costa

run plan to give the Swiss more time to rest. He didn't return to the cockpit for almost another six hours, doing so only after it took him "maybe 15 minutes" to get his race boot back on.

The pain was more acute in slow zones and safety car interruptions, but the adrenalin and concentration required to lap quickly in the chaotic conditions meant Scherer couldn't focus on it too much. He continued to left-foot brake, but used "the whole leg instead" as he had done in Formula 3, while shrugging off questions about the extent of the damage. "I check after the race," he said. "I don't want to know before, because I want to drive and I want to win this thing."

That he did, with Silver-graded Smiechowski and former Lamborghini factory driver Costa more than playing their parts. Costa had to serve a drive-through issued 16.5 hours after Scherer had passed two cars before the line after a safety

car at 8pm, but "drove like an animal" to preserve the gap back to the chasing WRT ORECA driven by Polish hero Robert Kubica, Louis Deletraz and Rui Andrade.

Costa had built a half-minute advantage over Andrade when two favourable slow zones caused it to balloon north of two minutes, only to come back down again to 50s and then 16s after the drive-through with a little over three hours to go. A tense finish appeared likely, but Kubica, victorious on that famous day in Montreal 15 years ago, was never able to get back on terms. Deletraz managed to get to within eight seconds of Scherer prior to the final stops, but Scherer's two-second shorter fill meant he never truly came under pressure. The gap at the flag stretched back to 21s, with Kubica of the opinion that Inter Europol "had more in the pocket" if needed.


"After Spa I said, 'If they keep this performance, they will lap

"Hearing the Polish anthem on the podium took my breath away. I always thought this dream was too big"

everyone," he recalled. "They did lap everyone, apart from ourselves. They had a really strong car. For us it was definitely too strong."

"Our performance was a tiny bit quicker through the race I would say, especially on the second and third stint of the tyre," reckoned Scherer. "I think that made us at the end the small difference."

Costa was prepared to do a quintuple stint to the finish before being brought in after a treble for Scherer, who then lost his radio. It prompted Costa, admitting later "I was very scared to be honest", to take the unusual action of signalling to his team-mate from the pitwall. "I said, 'Maybe if I go there, with the colours we've got, maybe he can see me easier,'" grinned the Spaniard, whose decision to leave Lambo upon discovering he wouldn't be part of its LMDh plans has ▶



LMP2 RACE PACE		
AVERAGE OF TOP 10 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Robin Frijns (#31)	3m36.706s
2	Paul-Loup Chatin (#48)	3m37.078s
3	Louis Deletraz (#41)	3m37.088s
4	Filipe Albuquerque (#22)	3m37.490s
5	Ferdinand Habsburg (#31)	3m37.557s
6	Robert Kubica (#41)	3m37.579s
AVERAGE OF TOP 30 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Robin Frijns (#31)	3m37.506s
2	Paul-Loup Chatin (#48)	3m38.029s
3	Filipe Albuquerque (#22)	3m38.256s
4	Charles Milesi (#36)	3m38.283s
5	Louis Deletraz (#41)	3m38.298s
6	Robert Kubica (#41)	3m38.593s
AVERAGE OF TOP 50 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Robin Frijns (#31)	3m38.111s
2	Charles Milesi (#36)	3m38.771s
3	Paul-Loup Chatin (#48)	3m38.799s
4	Filipe Albuquerque (#22)	3m38.914s
5	Louis Deletraz (#41)	3m39.194s
6	Robert Kubica (#41)	3m39.325s



WRT's Kubica/Deletraz/Andrade disappointed to have to settle for second

LMP2 IN BRIEF

**JOTA PACE GOES UNREWARDED**

Last year's LMP2 class winner Jota again showed prodigious pace at Le Mans (above), but Pietro Fittipaldi explained that "many little things ended up going wrong" during the race. Fastest in qualifying and second in Hyperpole, Fittipaldi moved to the front with a brave call of staying out on slicks in the first rain shower, but a brush with the wall at Tertre Rouge, engine overheating and a failed starter motor left him a frustrated 13th with Oliver Rasmussen and David Heinemeier Hansson. "It's just crazy, we've had so much pace and just haven't been able to get on the podium [in 2023]," he said.

RADIO ISSUE HINDERS PREMA

Miscommunication was cited as the reason for Prema's Filip Ugran missing the call to pit for rain tyres during the second deluge on Saturday night. The Romanian incurred light damage going straight on at Indianapolis before being hit hard in the right-rear corner by Salih Yoluc as he tried to recover. The car he shared with Juan Manuel Correa and Bent Viscaal finished a heavily delayed 16th in class. "He didn't understand that we are calling him inside, but I cannot blame him," team boss Rene Rosin said.

PAGENAUD'S RETURN

Twelve years after finishing second for Peugeot, 2019 Indianapolis 500 winner Simon Pagenaud made his return to Le Mans with Cool Racing. An overnight crash for Reshad de Gerus in the Porsche Curves ended his race, but Pagenaud voiced his intention "to be back every year". He believes it will be easier to avoid IndyCar schedule clashes now that series owner Roger Penske's legendary team has a World Endurance arm.

LUBIN'S LENGTHY PENALTY

United Autosports' challenge was down to one car early on when rookie Freddie Lubin cannoned into Mikkel Pedersen's Proton Porsche on the Mulsanne Straight. The #22 ORECA was unsettled when Lubin put his right-side wheels onto the apron and turned sharp left. Repairs took 26 minutes and he incurred a three-minute stop/go penalty that restricted the car he shared with Filipe Albuquerque and Phil Hanson to 11th. "It was a mistake, he knows it, but he's in pretty good company here," said team boss Richard Dean.

vindication in the form of a debut Le Mans victory. "He flashed me and I was like, 'OK, he knows what he's doing.'"

Kubica and Deletraz were disappointed to again settle for second, repeating their result with Prema last year, although it gave them the lead of the standings together with Andrade. WRT boss Vincent Vosse was equally gutted. "I was dreaming of giving back to Robert and Louis what we lost in 2021," he said.

Until the final half an hour, WRT had looked set to finish on the podium with both its cars. Robin Frijns was the fastest on averages of 10, 30 and 50 laps (see boxes), despite missing the Test Day on

"There's not a scratch anywhere on the car. It's very gutting because we got the puncture in the pitlane"

Formula E duty in Jakarta, in the car he shared with Ferdinand Habsburg and Sean Gelael. It had needed repairs and dropped off the lead lap after Habsburg found himself "completely out of control in the rain on slicks" entering the Porsche Curves during the first major deluge. His contact with the barriers paled in comparison though with the whack from Lilou Wadoux's Ferrari, which broke a toe link and required the rear bodywork to be replaced at a cost of six minutes. But what followed was highly impressive, and WRT edged higher up the order as the hours ticked away. "I never thought not giving up would reap such rewards, ever," said Habsburg.

With just over an hour to go, Frijns passed Rene Binder's Duqueine car for third into the first Mulsanne chicane, before damper failure cruelly dropped WRT back to fifth. Binder, Nico Pino and Neel Jani



"Just chip away and stay off the TV" was ethos to survive chaos





Costa “drove like an animal” to preserve advantage after having to serve a drive-through

gratefully accepted the final podium spot after losing ground with two punctures, but were almost thwarted by late dramas of their own. On the final lap, 2016 winner Jani braked for the Ford Chicane when “the whole right front suspension broke and I went straight across the corner”. A similar problem had left him unable to set a representative qualifying time.

WRT’s woes elevated the lead Signatech Alpine car to fourth in comfortably its best showing of the year. Going off-strategy early, combined with strong pace in clear air, vaulted Charles Milesi into the lead, and both Alpine entries featured strongly towards the front until Julien Canal (in for Milesi) spun following a safety car restart at the second Mulsanne chicane. Despite a trip into the gravel for Ollie Caldwell at Mulsanne Corner, the sister car ran in the top five until Memo Rojas clouted Kamui Kobayashi’s Toyota heading into a slow zone and crunched his left-front suspension. Replacing the front half-axle cost 17 minutes and any hope of a strong finish. A puncture was the only ailment for the fourth-placed car, which also featured Matthieu Vaxiviere, as Milesi overtook the struggling Frijns late on.

Another equipe to bemoan a tyre drama was the polesitting IDEC Sport squad, which fell back to sixth when Laurents Horr was slowed by a left-rear puncture inside the final two hours. Sporting director Nicolas Minassian admitted to feeling “satisfied, but sad” at missing out on a rostrum for Horr, Paul-Loup Chatin and Paul Lafargue, who completed just 42s above his six-hour minimum drive time.

“There’s not a scratch anywhere on the car,” said Minassian. “It’s very gutting because we got the puncture in the pitlane. We were



Doughty fightback for WRT’s Frijns/Habsburg/Gelael fell short of podium

2.0-bar, by the time we arrive at 60km/h we are 1.7, by the end of the pitlane it was 1.5 and then the tyre was gone.”

Hard-luck stories abounded after the race, not least at United Autosports. Tom Blomqvist had taken the lead after making up 33s on Scherer in “some of the hardest conditions I’ve been in” before taking slicks and briefly visiting the gravel. Damaged brake lines meant he had no chance of avoiding a crash at the Porsche Curves. The car (also shared with Josh Pierson) still finished eighth, despite Oliver Jarvis losing its left-front wheel, suspected to be the result of damage to the retaining pegs when the wheelnut stripped in the pits.

Its maximum score in the WEC’s double points round thrusts Inter Europol into championship contention, just four off the summit. But whatever happens for the remainder of the season, Scherer’s against-the-odds drive provided a fittingly memorable story for the Le Mans centenary that will be talked about for years to come.

“Fabio was the hero!” hailed Costa, before adding: “He was driving almost better than he usually does!” 🇫🇷

LMP2

BRAUN’S PRO-AM TRIUMPH ON LE MANS RETURN

Colin Braun must have experienced a bit of deja vu last weekend. On his previous Le Mans outing, Peugeot was making its long-awaited return, and rain blighted proceedings. And just like 2007, when an 18-year-old Braun drove a Risi Ferrari to second in GT2, the IMSA regular came away with silverware after scooping LMP2 Pro-Am spoils for Algarve Pro Racing.

A puncture and faulty accident data recorder that cost 13 minutes in the pits were the only notable delays for the ORECA-Gibson 07 that Braun shared with George Kurtz and James Allen – the driver who denied Kurtz LMP2 honours in a

dramatic finish at the Daytona 24 Hours.

“It was a really tricky race; when the big rain showers came down, it was crazy,” said Braun, a Daytona GTP winner for Acura who began coaching Le Mans rookie Kurtz a decade ago in Radicals. “So glad to survive all that. The rest of the race was chaos too! We quickly converted to just trying to chip away and stay off the TV.”

APR took the lead when Ben Barnicoat crashed AF Corse’s ORECA at the Porsche Curves in hour 15, curtailing a strong run with Francois Perrodo and Norman Nato.

Malthe Jakobsen’s crash in the Cool Racing

entry he shared with Nicolas Lapierre and Alexandre Coigny required a 29-minute spell in the garage after 2am. The only pro-am car to lead the LMP2 field overall ended up second in the sub-division, joined on the podium by the patriotically liveried all-Belgian DKR Engineering crew, which needed a starter motor replacement on the dummy grid. The rear bodywork then had to be replaced as Maxime Martin concluded his opening triple stint when he was hit by a Glickenhause, and this took 80 minutes to fix.

“It’s highs and lows but it’s better to finish with a high,” said Martin.

LE MANS
100
YEARS



Corvette started on pole, but less than two hours later an early bath looked a real possibility

HYPERCAR

LMP2

GTE AM

CORVETTE SIGNS OFF WITH REMARKABLE RECOVERY

The factory team's final appearance at Le Mans featured a drama-filled comeback that the drivers had to pinch themselves to believe had unfolded in their favour

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport
IMAGES

A head of last weekend's GTE Am Le Mans swansong, Ben Keating admitted he still found it difficult to understand how the Chevrolet Corvette C8.R he shares with Nicky Catsburg and Nico Varrone had finished second at the previous World Endurance Championship round at Spa at the end of April. A combination of a hefty weight penalty for the class table-toppers, an incorrect tyre call, and what Keating described as a "terrible two hours" when he was behind the wheel left him baffled by the impressive result. "I had to go back and watch the race two or three times to figure out how in the world we ended up there," he said. "It was crazy."

And it was a case of déjà vu at Le Mans. Those pre-event words from Keating became even more relevant after a truly remarkable comeback for the Corvette crew enabled the Pratt & Miller-run team to sign off from Le Mans as a full factory entrant with a win that finally ended a drought stretching back to 2015. The bare facts state

that Catsburg, Varrone and Keating started on GTE Am pole and took the class win by a lap, but that does not tell even a portion of the incredible story of the race. The simple statistic that fewer than half of the division's 21 starters made it to the finish is evidence of that.

The dramatic event for the Corvette drivers began in first practice on Wednesday. Right at the end of the three-hour session, Varrone – the Argentinian admitted he struggled with the balance of the C8.R at the start of the week – crashed at Tertre Rouge and did a fair amount of damage. Enough to mean it was only with four minutes remaining of the subsequent qualifying session, approaching three hours after the accident, that Catsburg finally posted a time – and that was the fastest GTE lap of the session. While he was ultimately relegated to third, it was an early indication of the inherent performance of the car. Keating then backed that up by topping the bronze driver-only Hyperpole shootout by 1.5 seconds.

That was an impressive recovery, but is trivial compared to what



GTE AM RACE PACE

AVERAGE OF TOP 10 FASTEST LAPS

1	Ben Barker (#86)	3m51.312s
2	Nicky Catsburg (#33)	3m51.783s
3	Nico Varrone (#33)	3m51.828s
4	Matteo Cairoli (#56)	3m52.058s
5	Harry Tincknell (#88)	3m52.196s
6	Riccardo Pera (#86)	3m52.229s

AVERAGE OF TOP 30 FASTEST LAPS

1	Ben Barker (#86)	3m52.010s
2	Nicky Catsburg (#33)	3m52.270s
3	Matteo Cairoli (#56)	3m52.636s
4	Nico Varrone (#33)	3m52.997s
5	Harry Tincknell (#88)	3m53.044s
6	Charlie Eastwood (#25)	3m53.201s

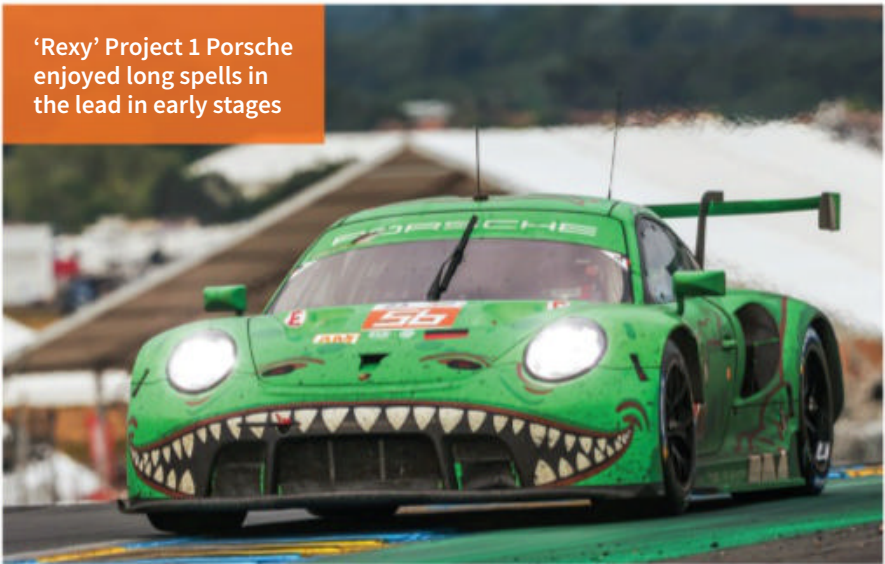
AVERAGE OF TOP 50 FASTEST LAPS

1	Ben Barker (#86)	3m52.513s
2	Nicky Catsburg (#33)	3m52.704s
3	Matteo Cairoli (#56)	3m53.044s
4	Charlie Eastwood (#25)	3m53.583s
5	Davide Rigon (#54)	3m54.015s
6	Nico Varrone (#33)	3m54.486s

Varrone, Catsburg and Keating can't stop grinning after "crazy emotional rollercoaster"

TRIENITZ/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

'Rexy' Project 1 Porsche enjoyed long spells in the lead in early stages



the squad achieved come the race. Catsburg maintained the lead at the start but was one of a bunch of cars to pit under the early safety car on lap three. The Corvette was in trouble barely an hour and a half into the enduro when it was wheeled into the garage. The front-right damper needed replacing, and hopes of ending that Le Mans winless run seemed to evaporate. In the end, the C8.R spent 9m45s in the pits before returning to the fray two laps down. And its drivers were despondent, even joking about heading home early. But they did not give up and the team was rewarded with a comeback story that was somehow befitting of this centenary edition of the legendary race. Things still didn't look too promising in the fourth hour when the #33 machine did not manage to recover a lap during the safety car pass-around process. Yet there was a crucial moment at this point in the race when the heavy rain first arrived. While Riccardo Pera in the GR Racing Porsche 911 RSR, which had been consistently running in the top three by this stage, and Lilou Wadoux

in the #83 AF Corse Ferrari 488 both speared into the barriers approaching the Porsche Curves, the Frenchwoman avoiding serious injury after whizzing down the escape road at almost unabated speed, the Corvette avoided such woes. And that was thanks to a smart bit of thinking from Keating, last year's GTE Am winner in a TF Sport Aston Martin, who knew that the slight ridge where the public road meets permanent circuit could cause a problem.

“I just had the feeling that, if I turned and went through this in the wet on slick tyres, I’m done”

“I’m coming up to the Porsche Curves in sixth gear on slick tyres and I had a wall of water on my windscreen,” said Keating. “I think my guardian angels were with me because I made the decision not to turn. I made the decision to stay on the public road because I just had the feeling that, if I turned and went through this in the wet on slick tyres, I’m done. I went straight, I slowly reached down to a stop, I put it in first gear, whipped it around and I got back on track. Then I’m tiptoeing around like I’m on ice and I can’t even go to the accelerator without getting loose. I felt really bad because I cost the team 20s and I’m trying to push. It turns out I think I made a really good decision because then every car is going off everywhere.” In a race where survival was so key, it was a smart move. The Corvette did then gain a lap during the third and final safety car period before another of its pre-race plans was broken when, in addition to driving in the rain, Keating also took the wheel at night. While many of the rival teams’ Pros were behind the wheel, Varrone had briefly felt unwell. When the former BRDC F3 racer did ▶

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GTE AM IN BRIEF

**BMW TEAM'S NEW FERRARI...**

There was certainly no opportunity for the Walkenhorst Motorsport squad to ease itself gently into racing at Le Mans when its debut, secured via winning the winter Asian Le Mans Series title, proved to be a dramatic contest. Despite the regular BMW squad's Ferrari (above) having a few offs when the rain arrived, it was able to continue and achieved its objective of finishing, eighth in class, albeit six laps behind the leaders.

...AND UNLUCKY JMW SWANSONG

It was a disappointing final Le Mans GTE Am outing for JMW Motorsport's Ferrari 488 GTE Evo. The car originally made its Circuit de la Sarthe debut in pre-Evo spec in 2017, when it won the class, and has appeared each year since, leading some to believe that it is the chassis with the most Le Mans appearances. It featured towards the front in the opening hours before the second of two incidents, this one with the #7 Toyota, forced it out of the race.

STOPPING AT D'STATION

While TF Sport was delighted to snare a podium with its #25 Aston Martin, it was a less successful event for the #777 D'Station car it also entered. Casper Stevenson admitted to pushing "a bit over the limit" and losing control at the fast sweeper before Tertre Rouge in opening practice, clouting the barriers before being collected by the Tower ORECA. With the chassis damaged, the engine and gearbox were transferred to the squad's spare European Le Mans Series Aston, which was brought over on Wednesday night, and the car re-emerged in final practice. But the race proved a disappointment when an electrical issue caused a retirement.

FASSBENDER CRASHES OUT

Another car in the spotlight was the #911 Proton Competition Porsche 911 RSR, thanks to film star Michael Fassbender being at the wheel alongside Richard Lietz and Martin Rump. Despite not a single Porsche making the Hyperpole shootout, it was among the cars to enjoy a stint in the lead, in the sixth hour, but was another to crash out when Fassbender speared into the barriers at Karting with four hours remaining.

NO JOY FOR RIED AT PROTON

Jonas Ried, the 18-year-old son of GTE Am regular Christian, was a late call-up to drive one of his family Proton team's Porsches, having moved into endurance racing from single-seaters for this year. But the young German's Le Mans debut ended in dramatic fashion when he had a hefty crash at Indianapolis in the 15th hour. All four of the Proton-entered Porsches therefore failed to make the finish.

subsequently pick up the mantle, he and Catsburg delivered some strong pace to haul the car back onto the lead lap. And, while others continued to fall by the wayside, the Corvette relentlessly climbed back up the order. It retook the lead for the first time in the 19th hour and ultimately had the pace advantage over its nearest rivals, the #85 Iron Dames Porsche and the #25 TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage, to cement its place at the front and score one of the unlikeliest of victories.

"At midnight, I told my wife I had done the math and I think the best we can do is seventh place," related Keating. "To have this result is incredible — the emotional rollercoaster was crazy."

Catsburg, who was delighted to finally add a Le Mans victory to an impressive CV that also includes Spa and Nurburgring 24 Hours triumphs, added: "It was insane we managed to get back. It's a great reward for the guys who build the car and work so hard."

While there was joy for Corvette, there was disappointment for several of the other crews that also led chunks of the race. The #57 Kessel Racing Ferrari had looked in podium contention before a three-minute stop at two-thirds distance to assess and fix repairs after contact with an LMP2 machine, only for Daniel Serra to go off at Indianapolis when it did return to the fray. Another frontrunning Ferrari in strife was the venerable JMW 488, but Giacomo Petrobelli spun it off at the Porsche Curves before it later got caught up in the sizeable night-time clash with the #7 Toyota. The 'Rexy' Project 1 Porsche also enjoyed long spells in the lead early on thanks to the impressive pace of Matteo Cairoli, but its podium challenge became extinct with a lengthy late stop.

"I told my wife I'd done the math and I think the best we can do is seventh place. To get this result is incredible"

One car that grew stronger as the race went on was the TF Sport Aston, which eventually finished second. This was despite what team boss Tom Ferrier referred to as "a few whoopsies" (an overnight puncture and drive-through penalty for overtaking under yellow flags), before Charlie Eastwood boldly dived around the outside of the Iron Dames Porsche at the first Mulsanne Chicane in the penultimate hour. It was an impressive result for Eastwood and Le Mans 24 Hours debutants Michael Dinan and Ahmad Al Harthy. "To get a podium at Le Mans always feels like a win anyway, so very happy," added Ferrier.

The Dames trio of Rahel Frey, Michelle Gattling and Sarah Bovy were still on course for a podium until a brake change was needed in the final hour that ultimately dropped them just behind the GR Porsche. After its early barrier clout, it was a great recovery for the car Pera shared with Ben Barker and Michael Wainwright but, when it comes to the matter of celebrated comebacks, it pales into insignificance compared with what the Corvette trio achieved.

To become the first GTE Am polesitter to finish on the Le Mans podium is one thing. To achieve that historic feat as the class said its farewell in such dramatic style is quite another. It seems that Keating shall, once again, be spending plenty of time watching replays of how Corvette scored the most unlikely of victories. 🇫🇷

Late brake change denied Iron Dames Porsche a podium



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INNOVATIVE CAR

NASCAR MAKES SOME NOISE IN FRANCE

The Chevy Camaro ZL1 stock car, suitably adapted for Le Mans, was more than just a visual and aural crowd-pleaser — there was impressive pace too

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Tweaked NASCAR had the speed to run ahead of GTE Am field

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

You couldn't fail to notice the 'Garage 56' NASCAR entry at last week's Le Mans 24 Hours. Yes, there was the obvious visual difference of the Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 stock car compared to the prototypes and GTs making up the rest of the 62-strong grid. But it was the sound, too. The thundering roar of the 5.8-litre V8 engine was completely distinct from everything else on track, the perfect metaphor for this ambitious project.

It certainly created a buzz, with drivers, teams and fans all transfixed by it. And a driver line-up comprising stars from the worlds of Formula 1 (Jenson Button),

NASCAR (Jimmie Johnson) and Le Mans (Mike Rockenfeller) undoubtedly added to the interest.

Qualifying demonstrated that the Chevy was fast, too. The Hendrick Motorsports squad behind the car deliberately played down pre-event expectations, but it was clear that clocking a 3m47.976s time — almost four seconds quicker than the top GTE Am machine — was better than anticipated. Even organiser the ACO opted to amend its regulations so that the car started at the rear of the LMP2 field rather than the very back. "To get down to the 3m48s range I was really pleasantly surprised — it's very hard with us never being here before," said Hendrick vice-president of competition Chad Knaus.

And it was also evident how much fun the drivers were having. "It's funny because the first time I drove this car, for the first five laps, I thought it was the biggest mistake of my life!" admitted Button. "But you slowly get used to it — you get used to the weight, the size and I absolutely love it." The 2009 F1 champion said the adapted race machine "feels like an F1 car now" compared to the regular NASCAR racer he has also driven.

Yet the team and its star drivers were aware that the race could be a different story. Yes, they didn't have to put a



Button and Rockenfeller had a blast in the Chevy

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

bronze-graded racer in the car, but they knew that it would be tricky in the rain and to maintain that fast pace over 24 hours.

Sure enough, the ZL1 was a handful in the wet, but it did still spend chunks of the race ahead of the GTE Am field before a near-90-minute pit delay in the closing stages meant it was classified 39th. "Sadly we had a transmission break but, all in all, it was a good one," said Johnson. "We always want more, though, because we're racers!"

But the result was somewhat irrelevant. It's the spirit of the initiative that will be remembered. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," summed up Rockenfeller. "I think people will talk about this car for a long, long time."

Anyone who heard it blasting around the Circuit de la Sarthe will likely agree. 🇫🇷



'Garage 56' entry was a big fan favourite

GODET/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

HYPERPOLE					
GRID	NO	DRIVER	CLASS	CAR	TIME
1	50	Antonio Fuoco	LMH	Ferrari 499P	3m22.982s
2	51	Alessandro Pier Guidi	LMH	Ferrari 499P	3m23.755s
3	8	Brendon Hartley	LMH	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	3m24.451s
4	75	Felipe Nasr	LMH	Porsche 963	3m24.531s
5	7	Kamui Kobayashi	LMH	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	3m24.933s
6	2	Earl Bamber	LMH	Cadillac V-Series.R	3m25.170s
7	5	Frederic Makowiecki	LMH	Porsche 963	3m25.176s
8	3	Sebastien Bourdais	LMH	Cadillac V-Series.R	3m25.521s
16	48	Paul-Loup Chatin	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m32.923s
17	28	Pietro Fittipaldi	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m33.035s
18	41	Louis Deletraz	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m33.240s
19	47	Reshad de Gerus	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m33.580s
20	63	Mirko Bortolotti	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m33.983s
21	14	Ben Hanley	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.021s
22	9	Bent Viscaal	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.658s
23	10	Gabriel Aubry	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.091s
40	33	Ben Keating	GTE Am	Chevrolet Corvette C8.R	3m52.376s
41	25	Ahmad Al Harthy	GTE Am	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	3m53.905s
42	54	Thomas Flohr	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m54.582s
43	21	Julien Piguet	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m54.744s
44	83	Luis Perez Companc	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m55.033s
45	57	Takeshi Kimura	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m55.637s
46	55	Jens Reno Moller	GTE Am	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	3m57.240s
47	74	Yorikatsu Tsujiko	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m59.648s

QUALIFYING					
GRID	NO	DRIVER	CLASS	CAR	
	50	Antonio Fuoco	LMH	Ferrari 499P	3m25.213s
	51	Alessandro Pier Guidi	LMH	Ferrari 499P	3m25.412s
	7	Kamui Kobayashi	LMH	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	3m25.485s
	8	Brendon Hartley	LMH	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	3m25.749s
	5	Frederic Makowiecki	LMH	Porsche 963	3m25.848s
	3	Sebastien Bourdais	LMH	Cadillac V-Series.R	3m25.924s
	2	Earl Bamber	LMH	Cadillac V-Series.R	3m26.020s
	75	Felipe Nasr	LMH	Porsche 963	3m26.589s
9	6	Kevin Estre	LMH	Porsche 963	3m26.900s
10	93	Mikkel Jensen	LMH	Peugeot 9X8	3m27.260s
11	94	Loic Duval	LMH	Peugeot 9X8	3m27.850s
12	708	Romain Dumas	LMH	Glickenhau-Pipo 007 LMH	3m28.497s
13	311	Pipo Derani	LMH	Cadillac V-Series.R	3m28.767s
14	709	Esteban Gutierrez	LMH	Glickenhau-Pipo 007 LMH	3m29.082s
15	4	Tom Dillmann	LMH	Vanwall-Gibson Vandervell 680	3m29.745s
60	38	Will Stevens	LMH	Porsche 963	no time
	28	Pietro Fittipaldi	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.751s
	41	Louis Deletraz	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.753s
	63	Mirko Bortolotti	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.793s
	10	Gabriel Aubry	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.985s
	48	Paul-Loup Chatin	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.985s
	47	Reshad de Gerus	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.105s
	9	Bent Viscaal	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.392s
	14	Ben Hanley	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.453s
24	45	James Allen	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.578s
25	22	Filipe Albuquerque	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.587s
26	923	Dries Vanthoor	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.658s
27	65	Job van Uitert	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.691s
28	34	Albert Costa	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.755s
29	23	Tom Blomqvist	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.853s
30	31	Robin Frijns	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.853s
31	37	Malthe Jakobsen	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m36.271s
32	80	Ben Barnicoat	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m36.483s
33	43	Maxime Martin	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m37.146s
34	35	Andre Negrão	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m37.498s
35	30	Neel Jani	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m37.584s
36	32	Anders Fjordbach	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m39.303s
37	39	Giedo van der Garde	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m49.288s
38	36	Matthieu Vaxiviere	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m59.171s
61	13		LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	no time
	83	Alessio Rovera	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m51.877s
	54	Davide Rigon	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m51.914s
	33	Nicky Catsburg	GTE Am	Chevrolet Corvette C8.R	3m52.228s
	25	Charlie Eastwood	GTE Am	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	3m52.431s
	57	Daniel Serra	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m52.459s
	55	Marco Sorensen	GTE Am	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	3m52.484s
	21	Ulysse de Pauw	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m52.968s
	74	Kei Cozzolino	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m53.263s
48	77	Julien Andlauer	GTE Am	Porsche 911 RSR	3m53.481s
49	86	Ben Barker	GTE Am	Porsche 911 RSR	3m53.531s
50	100	Jeff Segal	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m53.590s
51	85	Michelle Gatting	GTE Am	Porsche 911 RSR	3m53.603s
52	60	Alessio Picariello	GTE Am	Porsche 911 RSR	3m53.626s
53	72	Valentin Hasse-Clot	GTE Am	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	3m53.703s
54	56	Matteo Cairoli	GTE Am	Porsche 911 RSR	3m53.947s
55	911	Martin Rump	GTE Am	Porsche 911 RSR	3m54.129s
56	16	Jan Heylen	GTE Am	Porsche 911 RSR	3m54.293s
57	98	Alex Riberas	GTE Am	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	3m54.498s
58	66	Thomas Neubauer	GTE Am	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	3m55.991s
59	88	Harry Tincknell	GTE Am	Porsche 911 RSR	3m58.486s
62	777		GTE Am	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	no time
39	24	Mike Rockenfeller	Innov	Chevrolet Camaro ZL1	3m47.976s

RACE STATS

WINNERS' AVERAGE SPEED

Calado/Pier Guidi/Giovinazzi 120.626mph

FASTEST LAP

Hypercar

Fuoco

3m26.984s

147.260mph

LMP2

Frijns

3m36.043s

141.085mph

GTE Am

Varrone

3m50.439s

132.271mph

LAPS LED

#51 Ferrari

175

#8 Toyota

95

#94 Peugeot

34

#50 Ferrari

13

#2 Cadillac

9

#38 Porsche

8

#75 Porsche

5

#5 Porsche

3

SEASON STATS		
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP		
HYPERCAR		
1	Hartley/Hirakawa/Buemi	107
2	Pier Guidi/Giovinazzi/Calado	82
3	Lynn/Bamber/Westbrook	70
4	Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen	67
5	Lopez/Kobayashi/Conway	66
6	Cameron/Makowiecki/Christensen	40
LMP2		
1	Deletraz/Kubica/Andrade	94
2	Costa/Scherer/Smiechowski	90
3	Lubin/Hanson	74
4	Pierson/Jarvis	61
5	Albuquerque	56
6	Habsburg/Frijns/Gelael	52
GTE AM		
1	Keating/Catsburg/Varrone	133
2	Al Harthy/Eastwood/Dinan	59
3	Gatting/Frey/Bovy	56
4	Rigon/Castellacci/Flohr	47
5	Rovera/Wadoux/Perez Companc	43
6	Barker/Wainwright/Pera	39
MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP		
HYPERCAR		
1	Toyota	126
2	Ferrari	108
3	Cadillac	70
4	Porsche	54
5	Peugeot	35
6	Glickenhau	32

DON'T MISS

WEC REPORT

6 HOURS OF

MONZA

13 July issue

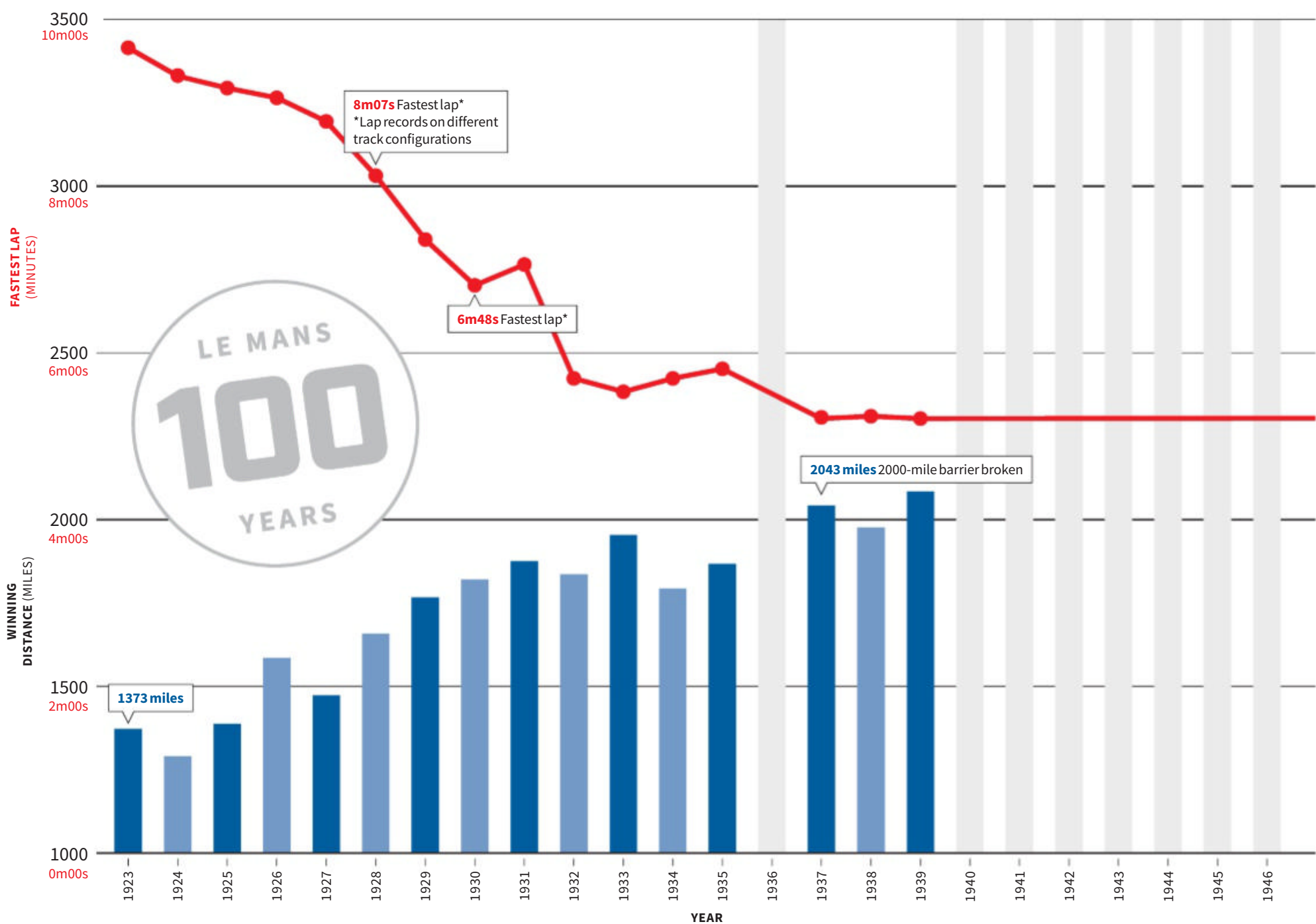
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RESULTS WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 4/7, LE MANS 24 HOURS (FRA), 10-11 JUNE (342 LAPS – 2895.647 MILES)							
POS	NO	DRIVERS			CLASS	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	51	James Calado (GBR) Alessandro Pier Guidi (ITA) Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)			Hypercar	Ferrari AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	24h00m18.099s
2	8	Sebastien Buemi (CHE) Brendon Hartley (NZL) Ryo Hirakawa (JPN)			Hypercar	Toyota Gazoo Racing / Toyota GR010 HYBRID	+1m21.793s
3	2	Earl Bamber (NZL) Alex Lynn (GBR) Richard Westbrook (GBR)			Hypercar	Cadillac Racing (Ganassi) / Cadillac V-Series.R	-1 lap
4	3	Sebastien Bourdais (FRA) Renger van der Zande (NLD) Scott Dixon (NZL)			Hypercar	Cadillac Racing (Ganassi) / Cadillac V-Series.R	-2 laps
5	50	Nicklas Nielsen (DNK) Antonio Fuoco (ITA) Miguel Molina (ESP)			Hypercar	Ferrari AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	-5 laps
6	708	Olivier Pla (FRA) Romain Dumas (FRA) Ryan Briscoe (AUS)			Hypercar	Glickenhause Racing / Glickenhause-Pipo 007 LMH	-7 laps
7	709	Franck Mailleux (FRA) Nathanael Berthon (FRA) Esteban Gutierrez (MEX)			Hypercar	Glickenhause Racing / Glickenhause-Pipo 007 LMH	-9 laps
8	93	Paul di Resta (GBR) Mikkel Jensen (DNK) Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)			Hypercar	Peugeot TotalEnergies / Peugeot 9X8	-12 laps
9	34	Fabio Scherer (CHE) Jakub Smiechowski (POL) Albert Costa (ESP)			LMP2	Inter Europol Competition / ORECA-Gibson 07	-14 laps
10	41	Robert Kubica (POL) Rui Andrade (AGO) Louis Deletraz (CHE)			LMP2	Team WRT / ORECA-Gibson 07	-14 laps
11	30	Neel Jani (CHE) Rene Binder (AUT) Nico Pino (CHL)			LMP2	Duqueine Team / ORECA-Gibson 07	-15 laps
12	36	Charles Milesi (FRA) Matthieu Vaxiviere (FRA) Julien Canal (FRA)			LMP2	Alpine (Signatech) / ORECA-Gibson 07	-15 laps
13	31	Sean Gelael (IDN) Ferdinand Habsburg (AUT) Robin Frijns (NLD)			LMP2	Team WRT / ORECA-Gibson 07	-15 laps
14	48	Paul-Loup Chatin (FRA) Paul Lafargue (FRA) Laurents Horr (DEU)			LMP2	IDEC Sport / ORECA-Gibson 07	-15 laps
15	10	Gabriel Aubry (FRA) Ryan Cullen (GBR) Matthias Kaiser (LIE)			LMP2	Vector Sport / ORECA-Gibson 07	-17 laps
16	5	Michael Christensen (DNK) Dane Cameron (USA) Frederic Makowiecki (FRA)			Hypercar	Porsche Penske Motorsport / Porsche 963	-17 laps
17	311	Jack Aitken (GBR) Pipo Derani (BRA) Alexander Sims (GBR)			Hypercar	Action Express Racing / Cadillac V-Series.R	-18 laps
18	23	Tom Blomqvist (GBR) Josh Pierson (USA) Oliver Jarvis (GBR)			LMP2	United Autosports / ORECA-Gibson 07	-19 laps
19	35	Andre Negrão (BRA) Olli Caldwell (GBR) Memo Rojas (MEX)			LMP2	Alpine (Signatech) / ORECA-Gibson 07	-20 laps
20	45	James Allen (AUS) George Kurtz (USA) Colin Braun (USA)			LMP2	Algarve Pro Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	-20 laps
21	22	Filipe Albuquerque (PRT) Phil Hanson (GBR) Freddie Lubin (GBR)			LMP2	United Autosports / ORECA-Gibson 07	-21 laps
22	6	Laurens Vanthoor (BEL) Kevin Estre (FRA) Andre Lotterer (DEU)			Hypercar	Porsche Penske Motorsport / Porsche 963	-22 laps
23	37	Nicolas Lapierre (FRA) Alexandre Coigny (CHE) Malthe Jakobsen (DNK)			LMP2	Cool Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	-25 laps
24	28	Pietro Fittipaldi (BRA) David Heinemeier Hansson (DNK) Oliver Rasmussen (DNK)			LMP2	Jota / ORECA-Gibson 07	-26 laps
25	65	Job van Uitert (NLD) Manuel Maldonado (VEN) Tijmen van der Helm (NLD)			LMP2	Panis Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	-26 laps
26	33	Nicky Catsburg (NLD) Ben Keating (USA) Nico Varrone (ARG)			GTE Am	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller) / Chevrolet Corvette C8.R	-29 laps
27	94	Nico Muller (CHE) Loic Duval (FRA) Gustavo Menezes (USA)			Hypercar	Peugeot TotalEnergies / Peugeot 9X8	-30 laps
28	25	Charlie Eastwood (GBR) Ahmad Al Harthy (OMN) Michael Dinan (USA)			GTE Am	ORT by TF / Aston Martin Vantage GTE	-30 laps
29	86	Ben Barker (GBR) Michael Wainwright (GBR) Riccardo Pera (ITA)			GTE Am	GR Racing / Porsche 911 RSR	-30 laps
30	85	Rahel Frey (CHE) Sarah Bovy (BEL) Michelle Gatting (DNK)			GTE Am	Iron Dames (Iron Lynx) / Porsche 911 RSR	-30 laps
31	54	Davide Rigon (ITA) Thomas Flohr (CHE) Francesco Castellacci (ITA)			GTE Am	AF Corse / Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	-30 laps
32	43	Maxime Martin (BEL) Tom van Rompuy (BEL) Ugo de Wilde (BEL)			LMP2	DKR Engineering / ORECA-Gibson 07	-31 laps
33	98	Alex Riberas (ESP) Ian James (GBR) Daniel Mancinelli (ITA)			GTE Am	NorthWest AMR (Prodrive) / Aston Martin Vantage GTE	-32 laps
34	9	Juan Manuel Correa (USA) Bent Viscaal (NLD) Filip Ugran (ROU)			LMP2	Prema Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	-32 laps
35	56	Matteo Cairoli (ITA) PJ Hyett (USA) Gunnar Jeannette (USA)			GTE Am	Project 1 - AO / Porsche 911 RSR	-33 laps
36	100	Jeff Segal (USA) Chandler Hull (USA) Andrew Haryanto (IDN)			GTE Am	Walkenhorst Motorsport / Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	-35 laps
37	39	Giedo van der Garde (NLD) Roberto Lacorte (ITA) Patrick Pilet (FRA)			LMP2	Graff Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	-39 laps
38	74	Kei Cozzolino (JPN) Yoriakatsu Tsujiko (JPN) Naoki Yokomizo (JPN)			GTE Am	Kessel Racing / Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	-39 laps
39	24	Mike Rockenfeller (DEU) Jimmie Johnson (USA) Jenson Button (GBR)			Innovative Car	Hendrick Motorsports / Chevrolet Camaro ZL1	-57 laps
40	38	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT) Will Stevens (GBR) Yifei Ye (CHN)			Hypercar	Hertz Team Jota / Porsche 963	-98 laps
R	57	Daniel Serra (BRA) Takeshi Kimura (JPN) Scott Huffaker (USA)			GTE Am	Kessel Racing / Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	254 laps-accident
R	911	Richard Lietz (AUT) Michael Fassbender (IRL) Martin Rump (EST)			GTE Am	Proton Competition / Porsche 911 RSR	246 laps-accident
R	80	Norman Nato (FRA) Francois Perrodo (FRA) Ben Barnicoat (GBR)			LMP2	AF Corse / ORECA-Gibson 07	183 laps-accident
R	88	Harry Tincknell (GBR) Don Yount (USA) Jonas Ried (DEU)			GTE Am	Proton Competition / Porsche 911 RSR	170 laps-accident
R	4	Tom Dillmann (FRA) Esteban Guerrieri (ARG) Tristan Vautier (FRA)			Hypercar	Floyd Vanwall Racing Team / Vanwall-Gibson Vandervell 680	165 laps-engine
R	777	Tomonobu Fujii (JPN) Satoshi Hoshino (JPN) Casper Stevenson (GBR)			GTE Am	D'Station Racing (TF) / Aston Martin Vantage GTE	163 laps-electrical
R	47	Reshad de Gerus (FRA) Vlad Lomko (RUS) Simon Pagenaud (FRA)			LMP2	Cool Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	158 laps-accident damage
R	77	Julien Andlauer (FRA) Christian Ried (DEU) Mikkel Overgaard Pedersen (DNK)			GTE Am	Dempsey-Proton Racing / Porsche 911 RSR	118 laps-accident
R	32	Mark Kvamme (USA) Jan Magnussen (DNK) Anders Fjordbach (DNK)			LMP2	Inter Europol Competition / ORECA-Gibson 07	117 laps-accident
R	63	Daniil Kvyat (RUS) Doriane Pin (FRA) Mirko Bortolotti (ITA)			LMP2	Prema Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	113 laps-accident
R	7	Mike Conway (GBR) Kamui Kobayashi (JPN) Jose Maria Lopez (ARG)			Hypercar	Toyota Gazoo Racing / Toyota GR010 HYBRID	103 laps-accident
R	66	Louis Prette (ITA) Thomas Neubauer (FRA) Giacomo Petrobelli (ITA)			GTE Am	JMW Motorsport / Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	89 laps-accident
R	923	Dries Vanthoor (BEL) Salih Yoluc (TUR) Tom Gamble (GBR)			LMP2	Racing Team Turkey (TF) / ORECA-Gibson 07	87 laps-accident damage
R	75	Felipe Nasr (BRA) Mathieu Jaminet (FRA) Nick Tandy (GBR)			Hypercar	Porsche Penske Motorsport / Porsche 963	84 laps-fuel pressure
R	72	Valentin Hasse-Clot (FRA) Arnold Robin (FRA) Maxime Robin (FRA)			GTE Am	TF Sport / Aston Martin Vantage GTE	58 laps-accident
R	83	Alessio Rovera (ITA) Luis Perez Companc (ARG) Lilou Wadoux (FRA)			GTE Am	Richard Mille AF Corse / Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	33 laps-accident
R	60	Alessio Picariello (BEL) Claudio Schiavoni (ITA) Matteo Cressoni (ITA)			GTE Am	Iron Lynx / Porsche 911 RSR	28 laps-accident
R	16	Jan Heylen (BEL) Ryan Hardwick (USA) Zacharie Robichon (CAN)			GTE Am	Proton Competition / Porsche 911 RSR	28 laps-accident
R	55	Marco Sorensen (DNK) Gustav Birch (DNK) Jens Reno Moller (DNK)			GTE Am	GMB Motorsport / Aston Martin Vantage GTE	21 laps-accident
R	21	Simon Mann (USA) Julien Piguet (FRA) Ulysse de Pauw (BEL)			GTE Am	AF Corse / Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	21 laps-accident
R	13	Ricky Taylor (USA) Steven Thomas (USA) Rene Rast (DEU)			LMP2	Tower Motorsports (TDS) / ORECA-Gibson 07	19 laps-accident
R	14	Mathias Beche (CHE) Rodrigo Sales (USA) Ben Hanley (GBR)			LMP2	Nielsen Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	18 laps-accident

THE ROLLERCOASTER RIDE OF LE MANS RECORDS

As with motorsport generally, the battle between improving technology and safety has pushed lap speeds and winning distances up and down in the 24 Hours. Here's how that contest has gone over the past century

KEVIN TURNER



KEY MILESTONES

KEY

- ✂ Track changes
- 🏆 Key record
- ✓ Rule changes

1923 The first edition of the Grand Prix d'Endurance is 'won' (there was not yet an official winner) by the Chenard-Walcker of Andre Lagache and Rene Leonard. They cover 128 laps of the same 10.7-mile circuit used for the 1921 French GP, a distance of 1373 miles.

✂ **1929** The circuit is shortened at the western end, reducing the lap distance to 10.2 miles. Henry Birkin's fastest lap is 46 seconds faster than his 1928 best, though part of the improvement is down to the new Bentley Speed Six that he and Woolf Barnato drive to victory, covering a record distance of 1767 miles.

✂ **1932** The circuit takes on what will become its familiar shape,

with a new section connecting the start/finish straight with Tertre Rouge and the Mulsanne straight. The new configuration is 8.4 miles, and Alfa Romeo driver Ferdinando Minoia sets a fastest lap 1m07s quicker than Birkin's 1930 lap record, though the 1931 distance record is not broken.

🏆 **1937** Le Mans rookie Jean-Pierre Wimille and ex-GP ace Robert Benoist become the first winners

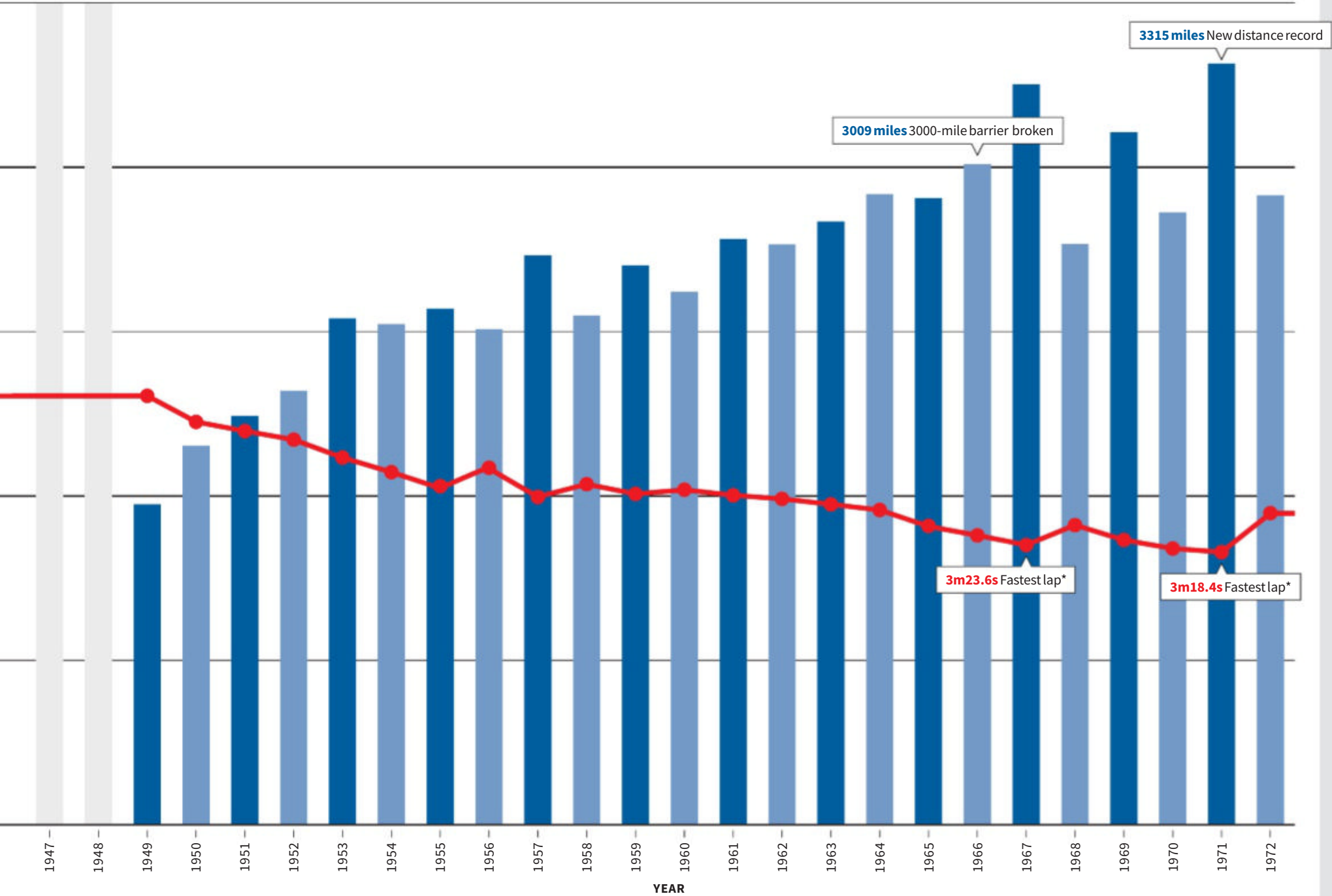
to cover more than 2000 miles in their Bugatti Type 57G.

🏆 **1950** A year after the repaired circuit hosts the first post-Second World War Le Mans, the distance and lap records both fall to Louis Rosier. The Frenchman's Talbot-Lago breaches the five-minute and 100mph lap average barriers with a best time of 4m53.5s, 102.83mph.

🏆 **1953** Improvements are now

WINNING MARGINS

SHORTEST			
YEAR	WINNING DRIVERS	RUNNERS-UP	WINNING MARGIN
1966	Bruce McLaren /Chris Amon	Ken Miles /Denny Hulme	20 metres
1969	Jacky Ickx /Jackie Oliver	Gerard Larrousse /Hans Herrmann	120 metres
1933	Tazio Nuvolari /Raymond Sommer	Luigi Chinetti /Philippe Varent	401 metres
2011	Marcel Fassler /Andre Lotterer /Benoit Treluyer	Pedro Lamy /Sebastien Bourdais /Simon Pagenaud	775 metres (13.854s)
LONGEST			
YEAR	WINNING DRIVERS	RUNNERS-UP	WINNING MARGIN
1927	Dudley Benjafield /Sammy Davis	Andre de Victor /Jean Hasley	217 miles
1987	Hans-Joachim Stuck /Derek Bell /Al Holbert	Pierre Yver /Bernard de Dryver /Jurgen Lassig	161 miles
1963	Ludovico Scarfiotti /Lorenzo Bandini	Jean Blaton ('Beurlys')/Gerald Langlois van Ophem	134 miles
1981	Jacky Ickx /Derek Bell	Jacky Haran /Philippe Streiff /Jean-Louis Schlesser	116 miles



coming thick and fast. The Jaguar C-type of Tony Rolt and Duncan Hamilton not only becomes the first car with disc brakes to win Le Mans, but also smashes the distance record by more than 200 miles and averages over 100mph for the 24 Hours for the first time.

✓ **1956** Following the 1955 disaster, tweaks are made to the pits and circuit, including removing the kink before the start/finish and

widening the track. Car rules are also changed – full-width windscreens are now mandatory – and speeds fall...

🏆 **1957** ...but not for long. The monstrous Ferrari 335 S of Mike Hawthorn brings the lap record under four minutes for the first time: 3m58.7s. The Jaguar D-type's finest hour with a 1-2-3-4-6 is topped by a new distance record of 2732 miles (327 laps).

🏆 **1966** The Ford-Ferrari battle pushes speeds up and the winning Bruce McLaren/Chris Amon GT40 MkII becomes the first car to break the 3000-mile barrier. AJ Foyt/Dan Gurney add nearly 250 miles to that the following year in their MkIV, while Mario Andretti and Denny Hulme leave the lap record at 3m23.6s. More than half a minute has been knocked off lap times in a decade.

✓ **1968** The banning of the big bangers and the introduction of the Ford chicane drastically slow lap times, while rain in the race contributes to the lowest winning distance since 1962.

🏆 **1971** Porsche's now developed 917 makes a mockery of the 1968 changes. Jackie Oliver sets a new lap record of 3m18.4s, an average of 151.86mph, in a long-tailed version, while the winning ▶

LE MANS 100 STATS

GROUP C PACE

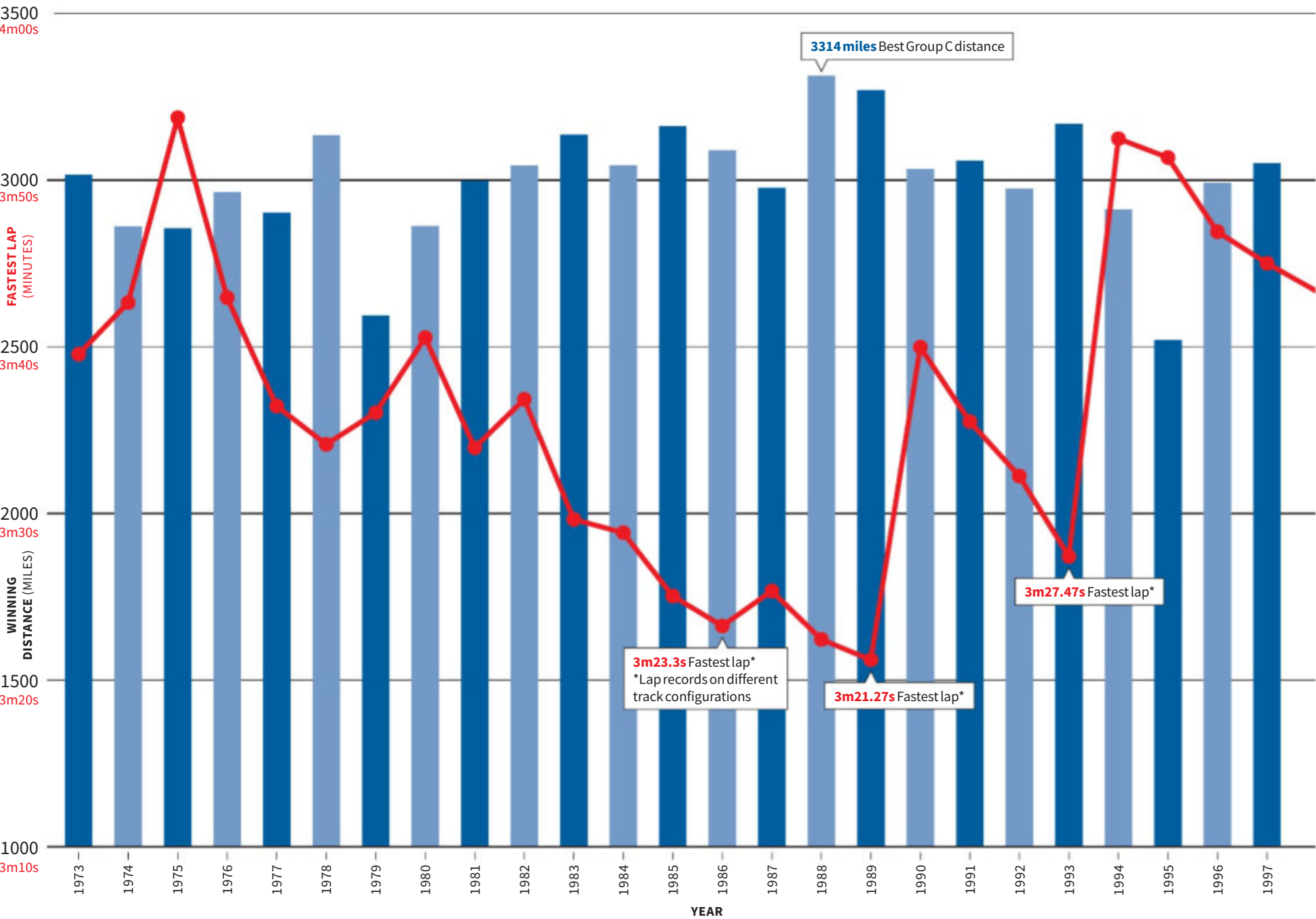
The fastest race lap by a Group C machine after the installation of the Mulsanne chicanes was **3m27.47s**, set by Eddie Irvine in 1993 driving a Toyota TS010 (right). The fastest prior to the chicanes was Alain Ferte's **3m21.27s** in a Jaguar XJR-9LM, recorded during the 1989 race.



MOST POLES...

Jacky Ickx scored five Le Mans pole positions, more than any other driver. Porsche is the most successful manufacturer, with 18 since its first in 1968.

MOST POLES	
DRIVERS	POLES
Jacky Ickx	5
Kamui Kobayashi	4
Bob Wollek	3
Rinaldo Capello	3
Stephane Sarrazin	3



KEY MILESTONES

Martini 917K of Helmut Marko/Gijs van Lennep sets a distance record of 3315 miles (397 laps) that will stand until 2010.

✓ **1972** A significant track overhaul introduces the Porsche Curves, and the lap distance is now a smidgen under 8.5 miles. Although minor changes are made in 1979 and 1986, the track remains largely the same until 1987. All this and the

imposition of a three-litre limit for sports-prototypes drastically cuts lap speeds and distances covered.

🏆 **1978** The turbocharged battle between Renault-Alpine and Porsche pushes lap times into the 3m34s, and winners Didier Pironi/Jean-Pierre Jaussaud cover 3135 miles, a record for the new circuit that stands until after the arrival of Group C.

🏆 **1985** As speeds increase during Group C, Hans-Joachim Stuck sets a new qualifying mark in terms of average speed – 156.47mph for his pole lap of 3m14.8s in a Porsche 962C.

✂️ **1987** A chicane is installed approaching the Dunlop bridge due to motorbike racing demands. This does not stop Jan Lammers, Andy Wallace and Johnny Dumfries getting

within about a mile of the distance record on their way to victory for Jaguar in the epic 1988 contest.

✂️ **1990** The Mulsanne chicanes controversially arrive, significantly slowing the cars. Mark Blundell's famous pole lap for Nissan is 12s slower than the 1989 mark, while fastest lap takes nearly 19s longer than the year before.

...AND FASTEST LAPS

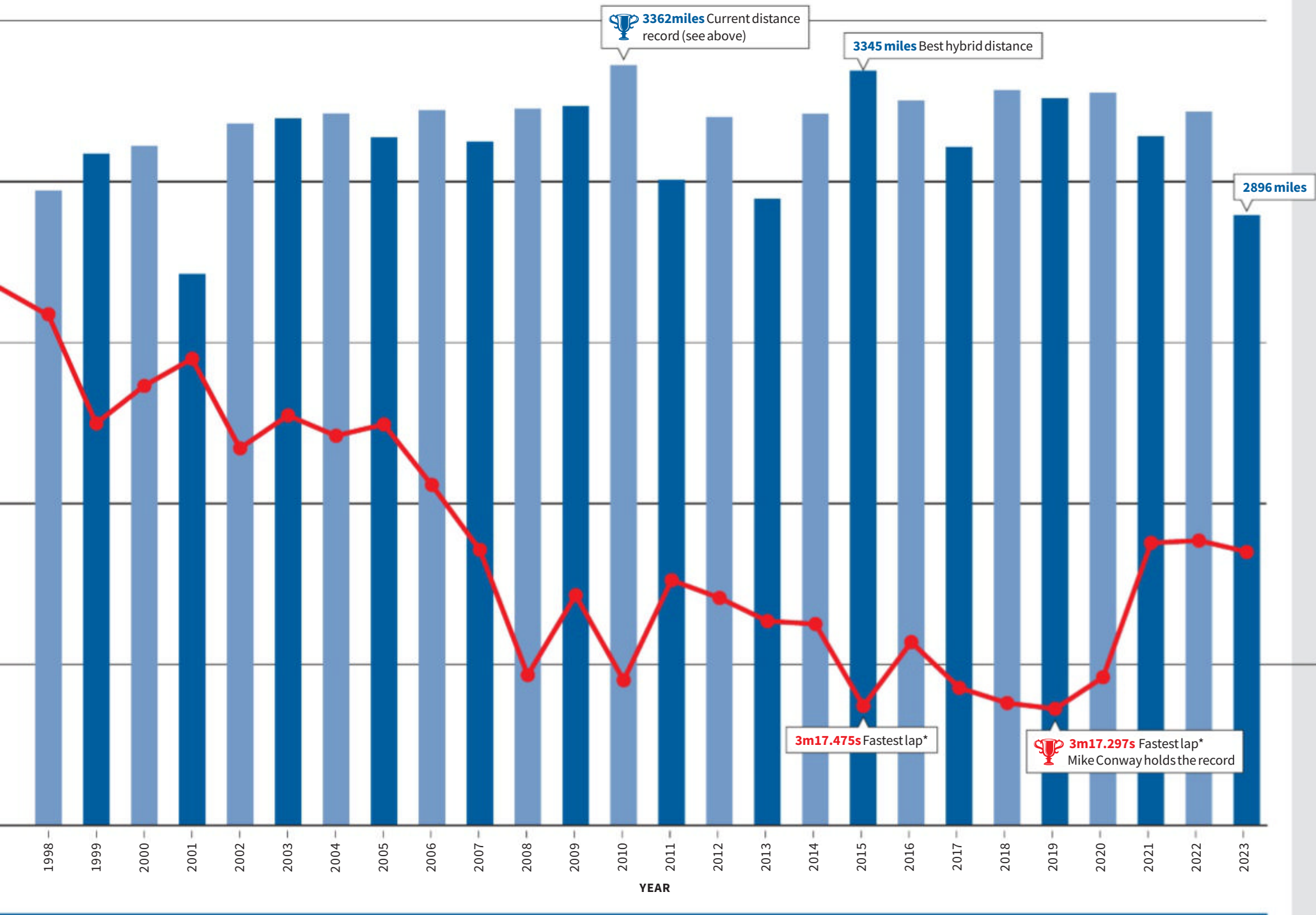
Ickx also holds the record for the number of fastest laps at five. Porsche tops the marque list with 14 fastest times.

FASTEST LAPS	
DRIVERS	FASTEST LAPS
Jacky Ickx	5
Mike Hawthorn	4
Andre Lotterer	4
Henry Birkin	3
Phil Hill	3
Tom Kristensen	3



KLYNSMITH/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

DISTANCE RECORD Timo Bernhard/Romain Dumas/Mike Rockenfeller covered **3362 miles (397 laps)** when they led an Audi 1-2-3 and won by a lap in their R15 TDI-plus in 2010, an average speed of nearly 140mph.



- ✓ **1994** The disappearance of Group C slows things down once again. When the McLaren F1 GTR wins on its debut in the wet 1995 edition, its 2520 miles is the lowest winning distance since 1956.
- ✗ **2002** The most-recent significant circuit change is the insertion of the left-right between the Dunlop Bridge and the existing Esses.
- 🏆 **2010** The Audi R15 TDI-plus of

Timo Bernhard/Romain Dumas/Mike Rockenfeller finally breaks the 1971 distance record, covering 3362 miles (397 laps). For only the second time since the 917 (2008 being the first), the fastest race lap dips below 3m20s. Unlike during the Group C days, pole and race times are close, with Loic Duval's charging 3m19.074s in the race pipping Sebastien Bourdais's pole mark of 3m19.711s.

- ✓ **2011** Rule changes, in particular smaller engines, slow the LMP1 cars, which also have reduced fuel capacity. Lap times increase by around 6s.
- 🏆 **2017** The increasing potency of the hybrid LMP1 machines pushes speeds up once again. Kamui Kobayashi records the fastest official Le Mans lap of 156.51mph as he takes pole with a 3m14.791s effort.
- ✓ **2021** The arrival of more cost-effective Hypercars for the top class reduces speeds again. Fastest lap and pole are both more than 8s slower than in the final year of LMP1 in 2020.
- 2023** Thanks to rain and caution periods, the winning Ferrari 499P covers 'only' 2896 miles. The GTE Am winner does 2650, slightly more than the overall 1979 victor, while the NASCAR records 2413.



Michelisz beats Azcona to the line for a Hyundai 1-2

WSC GROUP

Hyundais then Huff make a Roman conquest

TCR WORLD TOUR
VALLELUNGA (ITA)
11 JUNE
ROUND 3/9

After Norbert Michelisz had won a relatively uneventful opening race of the third round of the TCR World Tour at Vallelunga for the BRC Hyundai N Squadra Corse team, Rob Huff broke through in an incident-strewn second heat to take his first win in the series, putting himself firmly in title contention with Audi Sport Team Comtoyou.

The TCR World Tour took a temporary break from running with the European series to host a standalone round in Italy, and that made for a subdued grid of 16 cars, as opposed to 23 last time out at Spa. In qualifying, the two Hyundais of Michelisz and Mikel Azcona slipstreamed

their way to 1-2 on the grid ahead of the Cyan Racing Lynk & Co of Thed Bjork.

Michelisz and Azcona battled side by side at the start before settling down to build a gap to the Audi of Frederic Vervisch, who had got the jump on Bjork into Turn 1. Vervisch began to threaten as he closed in during the final stages with a better race distance set-up. Unfortunately, the Belgian's race came undone two laps from the end when he slowed to a crawl, dropping to 15th with what was discovered to be a disconnected turbo pipe.

This promoted Bjork to third, followed across the line by Huff. The Briton failed to make an impression on the Swede, with the team opting to change his gearbox after the race to resolve his performance issue.

In the second race, with the top 10 from qualifying reversed, Ma Qing Hua started from pole in his Lynk & Co with Spa race two

winner John Filippi's Audi alongside. Nestor Girolami was third in the ALM Motorsport Honda and was in a good position to challenge for the new Civic's first win, but the Argentinian had a problem with his start procedure and had to release the car before the lights went out, earning a jump-start penalty.

Huff had a great launch from fifth, passing Girolami, Filippi and then Yann Ehrlacher, and was up to second by the end of the opening tour, dispatching Ma two laps later at Turn 13 for the lead. Lynk & Co ace Ehrlacher followed Huff through, while Ma was knocked into two full 360-degree spins after contact with Filippi out of Turn 2 on lap four of 16.

Filippi's race ended at the next corner where he, the Lynk & Co of Santi Urrutia and Vervisch's Audi all went three-wide into the turn. Filippi ended up in the gravel, while Urrutia's car also sustained damage and then lost a tyre. Vervisch emerged unscathed in third while the safety car was called to collect Filippi's stranded RS3.

Huff went on to build a near-five-second lead after the restart to claim his first win of the year, while Ehrlacher was delighted to be able to hold off Vervisch's charging Audi to claim second while carrying maximum success ballast. Michelisz finished fourth, with the two Hyundais again cooperating, Azcona taking point on lap 10 to get the pair past Bjork, before returning the spot at the end.

Michelisz now leads the standings by 25 points over Ehrlacher, while Huff leaps up to third, just 33 points off the lead.

NEIL HUDSON



Huff leads Ehrlacher in the second stanza

WSC GROUP

Winner Truex tires them out

NASCAR CUP
SONOMA (USA)
11 JUNE
ROUND 16/36

New tyres and no mistakes helped Martin Truex Jr cruise to victory in last Sunday's NASCAR Cup race at Sonoma. It took 33 laps for Truex to get to the lead but, once he did, he didn't deviate far from it through the rest of the 110 tours with a fast Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota.

A late-race caution sent most of the lead-lap contenders, including Truex, to pitroad for new tyres, but Chase Elliott and two others stayed out on the restart with 15 laps remaining. It took Truex less than two laps to power around Elliott and reclaim the lead. From there, he easily held off Kyle Busch by 2.979 seconds to

earn his second win of the 2023 season. The win on a road course was a dramatic turnaround for Truex and JGR, which struggled terribly on such tracks last season, the first with the Next Gen car. Last season, the highest finishing Toyota driver at Sonoma was 18th.

"Just a lot of hard work by everybody at Toyota, TRD, JGR in the off-season to kind of redesign," said Truex. "We got to do some work with NASCAR to redesign some stuff. Just hats off to my team. To be so bad here last year and to come back and do this with the same car basically, it's really unbelievable."

Joey Logano finished third from Chris Buescher, while Elliott hung on with his older rubber to finish fifth after missing last week's race due to his suspension.

JIM UTTER



WEEKEND WINNERS

TCR WORLD TOUR
VALLELUNGA (ITA)
Race 1 Norbert Michelisz
BRC Squadra Corse (Hyundai Elantra N)
Race 2 Rob Huff
Comtoyou Racing (Audi RS3 LMS II)

NASCAR CUP
SONOMA (USA)
Martin Truex Jr
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Camry)

LE MANS CUP
LE MANS (FRA)
Race 1 Matt Bell/John Melsom
Nielsen Racing (Duqueine M30-D08)
Race 2 David Droux/Luis Sanjuan
Cool Racing (Ligier JSP320)

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Scherer Sport PHX (Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II)

EUROCUP-3
MONZA (ITA)
Races 1 & 2 Mari Boya
MP Motorsport

S5000
WINTON (AUS)
Races 1, 2 & 3 Joey Mawson
88 Racing



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Rossi triumphant amid penalty shootouts

LE MANS CUP
LE MANS (FRA)
8-9 JUNE
ROUND 2/5

Both of the Road to Le Mans races supporting the 24 Hours followed a similar pattern. They were crash-strewn contests, with each featuring lengthy safety car periods. And both times the on-the-road winner was penalised.

The Team Virage Ligier of Martin Rich and Manuel Espirito Santo had seemingly triumphed in the opener, but they were later relegated to fourth after being penalised for a pass behind the safety car. It was therefore the Nielsen Racing Duqueine of Matt Bell and John Melsom that triumphed, John Schauermaier having slipped back when he took over from early dominator Wayne Boyd.

An inspired call to pit the Team Thor Ligier of Audunn Gudmundsson and Colin Noble early in race two behind the safety car was undermined by the minimum pit time not being served, and they were demoted



to 15th. Instead, it was the Cool Racing Ligier of Luis Sanjuan and David Droux that took the spoils after grabbing second position with two laps to go.

Further back, all eyes were on MotoGP legend Valentino Rossi. He stormed his WRT BMW M4 GT3 into the lead of the GT3 class at the start of the opener but was then baulked by two tangling LMP3s, which cost him several places. Jerome Policand took over for the second half, but they claimed 13th,

with the sister car of Tim Whale and Max Hesse winning. Rossi made it a WRT double when he battled past Anders Fjordbach at Tertre Rouge for second late in race two. This was in effect for the victory when the leading Ferrari of Hiroshi Koizumi and Kei Cozzolino was sanctioned for "erratic driving".

STEPHEN LICKORISH

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Bagnaia on top at home as Marquez falls

MOTOGP
MUGELLO (ITA)
11 JUNE
ROUND 6/20

MotoGP's odd 2023 calendar meant four weeks had passed between the French Grand Prix and last weekend's Italian GP at Mugello, the first of a triple-header before a six-week summer break in July. That was a lot of time for championship leader Francesco Bagnaia to sit and stew over a third grand prix non-score of the 2023 campaign at Le Mans, following a collision instigated by Maverick Vinales.

Of all the places to return to action, Mugello was almost a must-win for Bagnaia. Not only did he need a strong weekend to slow his championship skid – he entered the round just one point clear of Marco Bezzecchi – but mainly because victory is an expectation for a factory Ducati rider at Mugello.

Bagnaia had made good on that in 2022. But a repeat in 2023 seemingly meant more. After qualifying on pole, winning the sprint and the GP, Bagnaia's assessment that it was the best weekend of his 2023 season was hard to argue with. The rapturous reception he received from the home crowd also offered him some solace. Some out of context comments caused controversy after Le Mans, and Bagnaia felt the need after the Mugello race to point out that what he reads on social media is irrelevant compared to what "true fans" show at the track.

More importantly, it was a weekend during which Bagnaia staked his claim as being unbeatable if he can just iron out his errors. A crash in the sprint could have been forgiven as spots of rain made the half-distance contest a bit of a lottery. In the GP, however, there would have been no excuse.



ALL PICS: GOLD AND GOOSE
 motorsport
 IMAGES



Bagnaia was headed for all of one corner, when Jack Miller used the KTM's rocket powers off the line to hit Turn 1 as the leader. Bagnaia fought straight back, scythed past into Turn 2, and never faced the tail of a MotoGP bike again for the remainder of the 23 laps.

In plumping for the medium rear tyre, Bagnaia's plan was to "sacrifice" grip in the final laps to keep himself out of reach of those on soft rubber – namely, the Pramac Ducati of Jorge Martin. When Martin took second away from Miller on lap two, Bagnaia

was 0.3 seconds clear. That gap stabilised for some time, Martin never quite able to make a breakthrough. By the end of lap 14, Bagnaia's lead stood at close to 0.9s and soon spilled over a second. There was no hope for Martin after that. Bagnaia got to the chequered flag 1.067s clear of Martin to celebrate his third GP victory of the season and take a 21-point lead in the standings, after Bezzecchi struggled to eighth following second in the sprint.

Johann Zarco overhauled Luca Marini late on to complete a podium that at one stage could have featured the factory Honda of Marc Marquez. After starting second, Marquez was in fourth behind Marini in the early stages. But the Honda, once again, bit him hard. When he locked the front under braking for the final corner on lap six, Marquez ended up on the dirty part of the track. The front of his Honda washed away, and his animated response in the gravel immediately afterwards was telling: he can do no more with this bike and all of Honda's efforts to fix it have not been enough. It came on a weekend when LCR Honda man Alex Rins suffered a broken leg in a crash and factory counterpart Joan Mir withdrew through injury after a tumble in practice.

At least Honda now heads to Sachsenring, a venue where a Marquez victory is odds-on





since he has won there every year of his GP career. Still, the constant crashing is starting to get to the eight-time world champion, who admitted after the Italian GP that they are “difficult on the mental side”. A spill for his brother Alex (Gresini Ducati) proved good news for Yamaha, because it promoted Franco Morbidelli into the top 10 behind the returning Enea Bastianini on the factory Ducati. Bastianini was competing in his first GP of the season, having been sidelined with a broken shoulder since March. Morbidelli’s team-mate Fabio Quartararo followed him home in 11th, unable to try any overtaking moves on his Yamaha M1. Quartararo’s tough Italian GP came on the same weekend he split with long-time manager Eric Mahe, suggesting that perhaps the 2021 world champion isn’t getting what he wants out of MotoGP now and that further changes may be needed.

LEWIS DUNCAN

NEXT REPORT

GERMAN GP
22 JUNE ISSUE

RESULTS ROUND 6/20, MUGELLO (ITA), 11 JUNE (23 LAPS – 74.959 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	41m16.863s
2	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+1.067s
3	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Pramac Ducati	+1.977s
4	Luca Marini (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+4.625s
5	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+8.925s
6	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+10.908s
7	Jack Miller (AUS)	KTM	+10.999s
8	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+12.654s
9	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Ducati	+17.102s
10	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Yamaha	+17.610s
11	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+17.861s
12	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	+19.110s
13	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+21.947s
14	Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA)	Gresini Ducati	+25.906s
15	Augusto Fernandez (ESP)	GasGas Tech 3 KTM	+26.500s
16	Michele Pirro (ITA)	Ducati	+30.150s
17	Raul Fernandez (ESP)	RNF Aprilia	+38.001s
18	Lorenzo Savadori (ITA)	RNF Aprilia	+38.662s
19	Jonas Folger (DEU)	GasGas Tech 3 KTM	+1m18.912s
R	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	14 laps-accident
R	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	Aprilia RNF	10 laps-accident
R	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Honda	5 laps-accident
NS	Joan Mir (ESP)	Honda	injury
NS	Alex Rins (ESP)	LCR Honda	injury

Winner’s average speed 108.949mph. Fastest lap Bagnaia 1m46.807s, 109.849mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Bagnaia 1m44.855s; 2 M Marquez 1m44.933s; 3 A Marquez 1m45.007s; 4 Marini 1m45.079s; 5 Miller 1m45.186s; 6 Martin 1m45.268s; 7 Bezzecchi 1m45.290s; 8 Espargaro 1m45.380s; 9 Zarco 1m45.627s; 10 Rins 1m45.702s; 11 Binder 1m45.731s; 12 Bastianini 1m46.884s.

QUALIFYING 1 A Marquez 1m45.231s; Miller 1m45.559s; 13 Vinales 1m45.591s; 14 Morbidelli 1m45.754s; 15 Quartararo 1m45.755s; 16 Nakagami 1m45.860s; 17 Pirro 1m46.002s; 18 Oliveira 1m46.003s; 19 Di Giannantonio 1m46.170s; 20 R Fernandez 1m46.347s; 21 A Fernandez 1m46.359s; 22 Savadori 1m47.244s; 23 Folger 1m47.806s.

SPRINT RACE (11 LAPS – 35.850 MILES)
1 Bagnaia 19m41.183s; 2 Bezzecchi +0.369s; 3 Martin +0.952s; 4 Zarco +1.009s; 5 Marini +3.668s; 6 Miller

+3.772s; 7 M Marquez +3.905s; 8 Espargaro +6.062s; 9 Bastianini +6.431s; 10 Quartararo +6.458s; 11 Binder +6.672s; 12 Oliveira +7.930s; 13 Vinales +9.022s; 14 Di Giannantonio +11.508s; 15 Pirro +14.344s; 16 Morbidelli +16.666s; 17 Nakagami +16.725s; 18 Savadori +17.247s; 19 R Fernandez +21.596s; 20 A Fernandez +35.212s; 21 Folger +46.189s; R Rins 3 laps; R A Marquez 0 laps-crash.

Winner’s average speed 109.263mph.
Fastest lap Bagnaia 1m46.187s, 110.491mph.

RIDERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Bagnaia 131; 2 Bezzecchi 110; 3 Martin 107; 4 Binder 92; 5 Zarco 88; 6 Marini 72; 7 Miller 62; 8 Quartararo 54; 9 Espargaro 54; 10 Vinales 53.

CONSTRUCTORS’ CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Ducati 211; 2 KTM 118; 3 Aprilia 92; 4 Honda 79; 5 Yamaha 64.

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2
MUGELLO (ITA)
Pedro Acosta
KTM Ajo (Kalex)

MOTO3
MUGELLO (ITA)
Daniel Holgado
(below)
Tech3 (KTM)



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Quartararo on the back foot on a weekend when he split with his manager

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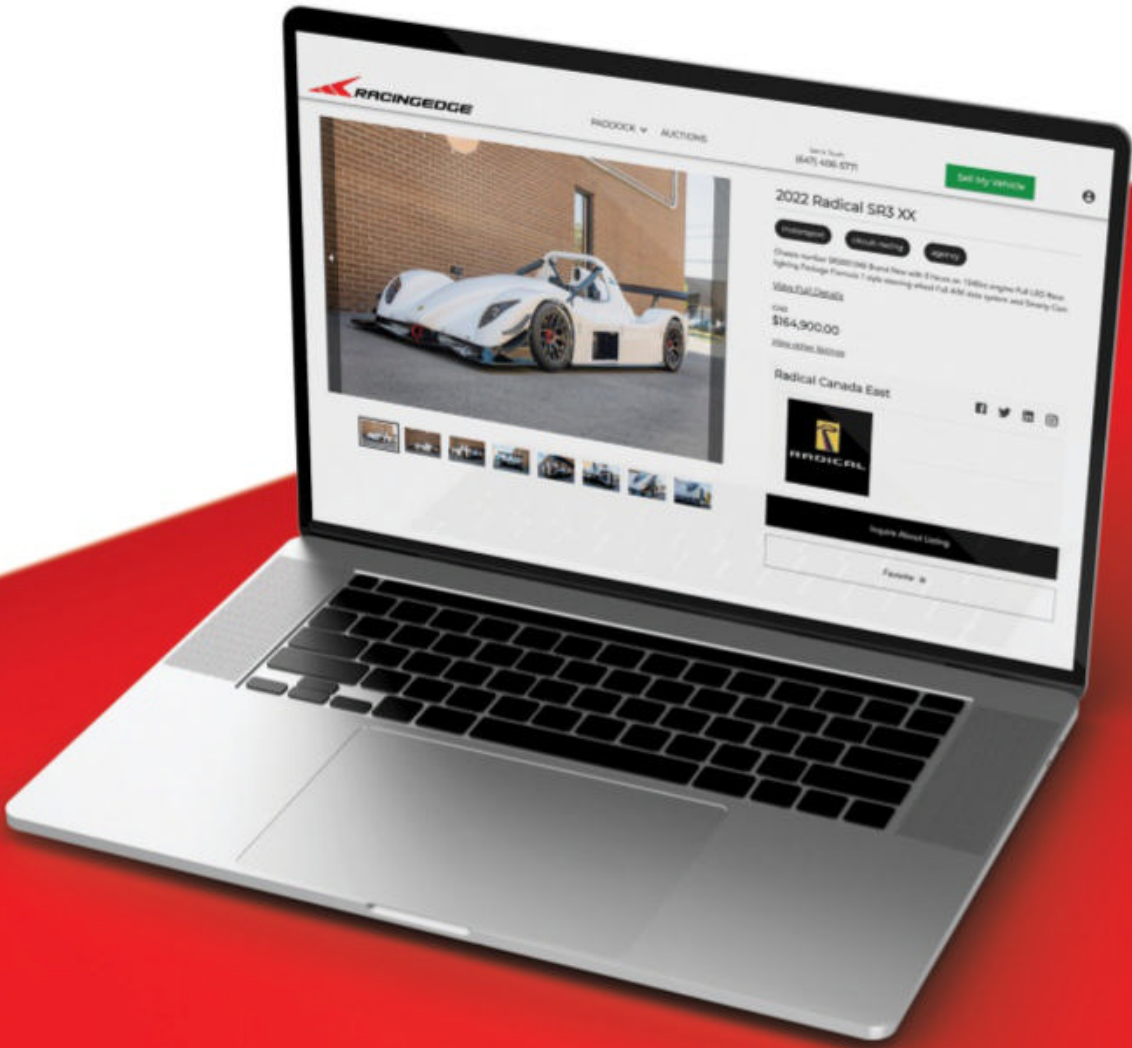


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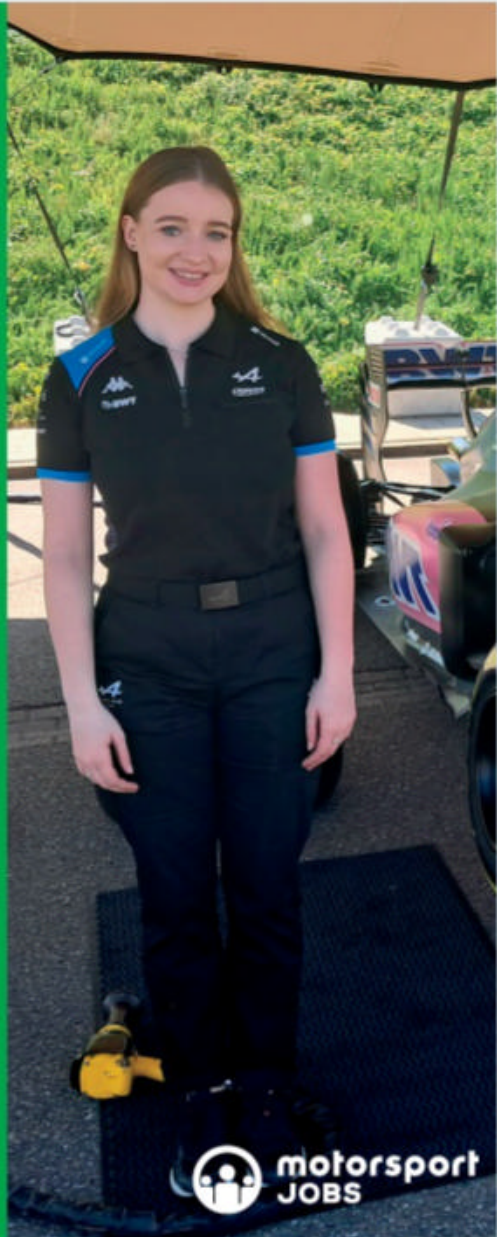


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UK talent search to begin for future **F1 Academy** stars

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RACEWAY MOTORSPORT
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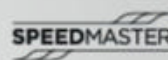
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Jordan will drive old Bowyer car in Silverstone Festival demo



NASCAR displays for major British events

AMERICAN SPEEDFEST

The Garage 56 Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 NASCAR that contested the Le Mans 24 Hours last weekend is due to be on display at this weekend's American SpeedFest event at Brands Hatch, while a special US stock car celebration is also planned for the Silverstone Festival later in the year.

The Hendrick Motorsports 'innovative car' generated plenty of interest at Le Mans, where it was driven by 2009 Formula 1 champion Jenson Button, seven-time NASCAR Cup title winner Jimmie Johnson and 2010 Le Mans victor Mike Rockenfeller to 39th place after comfortably outqualifying the GTE Am runners. Now the car is set to be on static display at Brands, when the traditional UK round of the NASCAR Euro Series is held.

There will also be a NASCAR element to the Silverstone Festival on 25-27 August. A number of cars from across the

75 years of NASCAR will take part in demonstrations at the event for the first time, with Andrew Jordan set to drive his ex-Clint Bowyer Toyota Camry from 2014. "I really bought the car to do the Classic 24 Hour race at Daytona in November, so having the chance to demo it at Silverstone in the summer is a big bonus," said Jordan. "It's going to be very different and very cool to have a group of them on track at the Festival. Being so fast, so noisy and totally unlike anything else on show, they are certain to get lots of attention."

Meanwhile, at SpeedFest this weekend, there will also be special celebrations for the 70th birthday of Chevrolet's Corvette. Three 20-minute races are due to be contested by the earliest C1, C2 and C3 Corvettes, while a handful of Chevrolet Camaros are also set to feature on the expected 20-car grid.

Among the entry is the Scuderia Filipinetti C3 that crashed heavily in the 1968 Le Mans 24 Hours and, once rebuilt, subsequently featured in Steve McQueen's *Le Mans* movie. It is due to be raced at Brands by Amanda Hennessy.

"She's coming from Switzerland and we've got three coming from Switzerland, one from Denmark, and one from America," explained organiser Simeon Chodosh. "It's exciting – this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and the enthusiasm of everyone is unbelievable."

A Corvette contingent is also planned to feature at the Silverstone Festival, as part of the Thundersports grid.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Brands Corvette celebration will feature ex-Le Mans C3



SWISS RACERS BOLSTER 750 FORMULA GRID

HISTORIC 750 FORMULA

Swiss enthusiast Hans Ruedi Howald made his race debut in Historic 750 Formula at Mallory Park on Sunday alongside his experienced pal Juerg Schneider, who first joined the fray with his Arthur JSG in 2018.

For engineer Howald, who makes retro racing parts and acquired his British-built DNC Mk3 as a restoration project from Merlyn authority Roger Saretzki in Germany, competing on track was the realisation of a long-held ambition.

After contesting a Gurston Down hillclimb in his Swiss-built Griffon Formula Renault – at the invitation of the late Simon Harratt, a regular in continental events – Howald's 1200km pilgrimage from near Bern to Mallory was particularly poignant. "My father was a friend of [reigning double World Sidecar racing champion] Fritz Scheidegger, who died in a racing accident here on 26 March 1967," he said. "Fritz was a family hero so for me the opportunity to make my first race here was important."

Howald and Schneider (pictured below, with Schneider to the left) – who is eager to start creating an Austin Seven monoposto racer around a chassis, engine, gearbox and axle already in his workshop – plan to return for more fun soon after taking best results of 10th and third respectively. Frenchman Nicolas Komaroff will join the cosmopolitan Historic 750 Formula grid with his Austin 7 at Snetterton on 12 August.

MARCUS PYE





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Raceway loses Silverstone disqualification appeal

BRITISH GT

Raceway Motorsport has lost its appeal against disqualification from last month's Silverstone 500 round of the British GT Championship.

The team's Ginetta G56 GT4, driven by Freddie Tomlinson and Stuart Middleton, took class victory on the road in the three-hour contest, but had been shown a black flag in the latter stages and the duo were disqualified post-race.

The punishment centred around Middleton driving through a red light at the end of the pitlane during the second

hour, with the car handed a lengthy stop/go penalty. This was initially suspended, pending a post-race investigation, before it was reinstated, prompting the team to appeal the decision.

An Investigatory Hearing was held by governing body Motorsport UK last week, which rejected the appeal.

"We're disappointed that it didn't go our way," said Raceway team principal Luca Hirst. "We've sort of taken their points on and they took our points on. We fell foul really from miscommunication from race control. Also, at the end of the pitlane we had a marshal

gesturing Stuart on track, that's why he went through the light, but the evidence wasn't substantial enough to show that he was waving him on.

"There were options given to us during the race that were then withdrawn. Our thoughts for keeping them on track was because we were under the impression that it was going to be investigated after the race. It was quite a surprise that the black flag came out at the end.

"At the end of the day, we've just got to move on to Snetterton now [this weekend]."

The decision to appeal meant that the results from Silverstone

and the subsequent round at Donington Park remained provisional, with Optimum Motorsport's Charles Clark and Jack Brown now awarded the Silverstone victory.

Clark and Brown also won on the road at Donington but, with the Silverstone result unofficial at the time, no compensation pitstop time penalties could be served during that race. Their retrospective addition means Clark and Brown drop to second behind Ian Gough and Tom Wrigley (Race Lab) in the Donington results, with a 26-point lead in the GT4 standings.

STEFAN MACKLEY

Topham to replace Tillbrook at Enduro for rest of season

BRITISH GT

Morgan Tillbrook has stepped down from driving duties at Enduro Motorsport and will be replaced by Matt Topham at the wheel of the team's McLaren 720S GT3 Evo for the remainder of the British GT season, beginning this weekend at Snetterton.

Tillbrook has competed in British GT full-time for the previous two seasons alongside his fellow Enduro co-founder Marcus Clutton. Together, the pairing have won three British GT events and finished third in last year's GT3 standings, as well as taking

numerous wins in the GT Cup.

The team expanded to running a GT4 entry this year alongside the GT3 car, but growing work commitments mean Tillbrook will no longer race for the squad this season.

"Purely Morgan's work commitments, [he's got] quite a lot on at the moment," said Clutton of the driver change.

"Something had to take a back step. We've been in contact with Matt, and we always knew he wanted to do GT3. It was an easy seat to fill to be honest."

Topham joins after finishing as runner-up in the GT4 standings last season with Darren Turner in a



JEP/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

Tillbrook has stepped back from driving

Newbridge Motorsport Aston Martin. He sampled Enduro's McLaren 720S Evo in the GT Cup at Snetterton earlier this month, when he bagged a brace of podium finishes.

STEFAN MACKLEY

Rudge's Ford Fiesta Mk2 hits the track for the first time

CTCRC

Jason Rudge debuted his new wide-arched Ford Fiesta Mk2 in the Classic Touring Car races at Castle Combe last weekend.

Rudge previously raced a Fiesta XR2 of similar vintage, but was tempted by the more modified version, powered by a two-litre Zetec engine, when delivering a car to a customer in Scotland.

Rudge recommissioned the car, which had previously been used mainly in sprints, to meet the latest circuit racing

regulations and plans significant further development with assistance from Kevin Clarke's Intersport Racing operation.

"It pulled very well," said the West Midlander, who took a best result of 10th from the two Historic and Classic Thunder Saloon races. "But fifth gear's very short so, by the time I've hit the bend in the pit straight, I'm in fifth gear and I'm flat out. I'm going to up the revs as well because it's only revving to 7000 at the minute and it's got a fair bit more in it."

MARK PAULSON



STEVE JONES

Rindt Trophy set to be highlight

THRUXTON HISTORIC

Fifty-five years after the British Automobile Racing Club opened the Hampshire airfield circuit, the centrepiece of this weekend's Thruxton Historic event remembers Formula 1 champion Jochen Rindt, who won its European F2 Championship features from 1968-1970.

The Jochen Rindt Trophy double-header will star two Lotuses from Germany. Oliver Mathai has entered his Roy Winkelmann Racing 59B – Rindt's team-mate Max Mosley's period mount – while Marc Sydow saddles his later

69, with opposition coming from Simon Langman in his Brabham BT30.

The 1600cc Formula Atlantics of Iain Rowley (ex-Howdy Holmes March 78B), Robin Lackford (ex-Dolly Indra GRD 272), John Hayes Harlow (ex-Ian Flux Ehrlich RP3/5) and Peter Venn (Lyncar) contrast with the Ralt RT4 wing car of Rory Smith.

Richard Trott (Chevron B43) takes on Paul Dibden (Argo JM6) and March men Benn Tilley (743) and Richard Cooke among the two-litre Toyota-powered F3s. Thruxton touring car ace of yore Karl Jones is also making his single-seater

comeback in a 1600cc F3 Ensign, as Ben Stiles and Clive Wood top the Pinto class in Van Diemen RF82s.

Earlier Historic FF2000s populate a superb grid, also racing on both days alongside classic Ferraris and Mighty Minis.

A special demonstration focuses on the F3 class of 1973, with Thruxton Racing School founder Ian Taylor's Baty March 733 – now owned by German Raimund Fein – and Mo Harness's Team Modus Ensign reunited. Mike Wilds and Bill Coombs are down to drive the cars respectively.

MARCUS PYE

IN THE HEADLINES

ROAD CAR TO RACE WINNER

Harrison Chamberlain gave his Volkswagen Golf GTI a winning debut in the Castle Combe Saloon Championship last weekend. The Golf, which replaces his Renault Megane, was Chamberlain's road car and runs a standard engine with 70,000 miles on the clock. On a wet track, Chamberlain outpaced brothers Gary and Adam Prebble, who tangled as they battled for the early lead, to claim a maiden win.

DASH HOME FOR SPARES

One-time Pre-'66 Touring Car champion James Ibbotson had an eventful weekend at Castle Combe. His Hillman Imp Super suffered an engine blow-up in Saturday's race and, after collecting spares in Milton Keynes, he fitted them on Sunday morning. But his effort went unrewarded when a loose alternator cable caused the Imp to pack up in the closing stages of Sunday's race.

BUGNER HITS TROUBLE

MG Owners' Club newcomer Scott Bugner saw his championship challenge falter at Castle Combe. In his first full season, the MG ZR pilot had won three of four races, but he retired from the race one lead at Combe with an electrical gremlin. After starting the second from the pitlane, Bugner had risen to sixth when a suspected tie rod failure sidelined him again, while chief rival Steve McDermid won both races.

SMILEY'S NEW TCR CAR

TCR UK champion Chris Smiley switched to a brand new Honda Civic Type R FL5 (below) at Oulton Park last weekend after running in JAS Motorsport's development car at the opening two race weekends. The new chassis includes revised dampers but Smiley was hit with a misfire and struggled for outright pace. He managed to finish fourth and seventh, leaving him ninth in the standings, 93 points behind championship leader Bruce Winfield.



PHIL LAUGHTON PHOTOGRAPHY



CULTRA HILLCLIMB RETURNS TO ACTION The oldest active hillclimb in the world, which started in 1905, returned after its most recent five-year pause as part of the Cultra Motorsport Festival in Northern Ireland last weekend. Held within the grounds of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum close to Belfast, 75 years of Porsche was the theme and it attracted a display and entries in celebration of the German marque. With organisation by the Thoroughbred Sports Car Club, vintage entries naturally featured and the Aston Martin LM2, which first took to Le Mans in a 1928 racing debut, opened the course.
Photograph by William Neill

New F1 Academy initiative to scout UK talent

MOTORSPORT UK

Motorsport UK has teamed up with F1 Academy to administer the first ‘Discover Your Drive’ programme from the series, aimed at encouraging more women to get involved in motorsport.

The new Formula 1-backed female-only single-seater category is aiming to launch a series of such campaigns to boost participation, both on and off the track. The first such scheme is being spearheaded by Motorsport UK in partnership with TeamSport Karting, which operates numerous British karting venues, and is designed to

find and support the next generation of female karters.

Based on the experience of its Academy experts, Motorsport UK will help TeamSport to identify girls aged between eight and 12 who have shown impressive ability. They will then be supported through the qualifying stages of the British Indoor Karting Championship, and the programme will initially be piloted at six TeamSport locations this year.

“Sports such as football and rugby have invested heavily in developing junior female talent at entry level and the respective programmes are now

yielding fantastic results,” said Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers. “We believe F1 Academy Discover Your Drive Karting UK will kickstart the same process within the UK. We hope to show young girls that motorsport is accessible and fun and support them on their journey, whether to compete in motorsport or to follow a professional career in multiple disciplines.”

F1 Academy managing director Susie Wolff added: “To have the support of likeminded organisations like Motorsport UK and TeamSport Karting to deliver our first national programme is hugely important.”

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Stuart Rolt 1937-2023

OBITUARY

Stuart Rolt, who died recently, was a consummate motorsport engineer. The great-great grandson of Peter Rolt, who owned The Thames Iron Works near Greenwich, where HMS Warrior and other fine ships were built, his influence on several generations of racers was profound.

Rolt and future Team Lotus Formula 1 driver John Miles were contemporaries and great friends. Cerebral guys both, they competed in pointy-tailed Austin Seven Ulsters with the Vintage Sports-Car Club in the 1960s, Rolt's GMU 714 a brilliantly designed and executed machine hallowed in Austin circles, not least in the 750 Motor Club, where Stuart's heart increasingly lay.

Rolt designed the successful Gryphon Clubmans cars – named after his family crest – before handing the project over to Andy Diamond. He subsequently penned

the monocoque Scarab Mk2 Formula Vee chassis, to sustain the 750MC category.

Having learned much about engine building at Racing Preparations in West London, Rolt became an indispensable guru to Vee, F4, FJunior, 1000cc and 2000cc F3 competitors, who rewarded him with results on track.

Rolt engineered Ronnie Grant's Super Vees, prepared the FJ Elva 200 in which sister Phoebe won the FISA Trophy in 1992, and lent cars freely to drivers of the calibre of multiple historic racing champion Benn Simms, simply because he adored being part of the scene and to see them win.

"Stuart was very generous but didn't like spending money," said Simms. "He was an absolute one-off who died in his workshop [where he had lived frugally for years on a mezzanine floor with his beloved cats], which was the right place for him."

MARCUS PYE

IN THE HEADLINES

McRAE CARS UP FOR SALE

Three rally cars driven by Colin McRae during his illustrious career will be auctioned at this year's Silverstone Festival. They include the 1977 Chrysler Sunbeam Ti Group A machine, which was the first rally car McRae bought, in 1985. McRae's 1992 British Championship-winning Subaru Legacy RS 'Group A' car and a 2005 Ford Escort Mk2 built by the 1995 World Rally champion himself are also up for grabs.

MENZIES HEADS HOME...

Three-time British Hillclimb champion Wallace Menzies heads the championship into his home event at Doune in Scotland this weekend. After 12 of the season's 30 run-offs, Menzies heads his rivals by a full 20 points after six wins and he is yet to finish outside of the top three. Scott Moran and Matthew Ryder lead the chase in similar Gould GR59s, while Alex Summers is bouncing back from a troubled start to the season in his DJ Firestorm.

...AS ENGINEER IS HILLBOUND

One of the engineers behind the success of Menzies, Duncan Barnes, has returned to competition this year with a Norma M20FC sports-racer. Barnes has fitted the prototype with a turbocharged Honda Type R engine, which is now delivering over 500bhp. "I've been competing since 1995, but mainly in Europe," said Barnes, who is currently leading the British Hillclimb Cup and has been working with Menzies since 2015.

RAYSONS ON THE MAINLAND

Guernsey hillclimbers Emma and Scott Rayson are tackling events on the mainland this season in their Empire Evo and Chevrolet Special sand racer respectively. Emma has recently stepped up to the Empire with 1070cc Suzuki power and set a new ladies record at Val des Terres last year. Husband Scott is driving the 6.5-litre Chevrolet-engined single-seater special (below).



PAUL LAWRENCE



Watts previously won rally title in the Sunbeam Tiger

Ex-BTCC racer Watts plans Peking-Paris attempt with wife

HISTORIC RALLYING

Former British Touring Car star and historic racer Patrick Watts plans to contest the daunting Peking to Paris Motor Challenge next May and June.

Watts will tackle the marathon rally with his wife Pam co-driving in his 1965 Sunbeam Tiger, in which Watts won the British Historic Rally Championship in 2006. He has not used the car during the

subsequent 17 years.

Widely regarded as one of the last great motoring adventures, the Peking-Paris runs for 36 days and covers 8700 miles, including sections across the desert in Mongolia. It is run by Historic Endurance Rallying Organisation-Endurance Rally Association for pre-1976 cars and has a capacity 90-car entry.

"Pam wanted to do it," said Watts. "She got talking to someone at Goodwood and

they do endurance rallies, so she picked an endurance rally that costs a fortune.

"The Tiger has got a low compression engine in it, but it's still got 400bhp. But I won't be using all of that as I'm worried it could be a bit thirsty. I wanted to make it fixable with one spanner and a hammer – I don't want to carry too many spares because it's all about weight."

PAUL LAWRENCE

Smith, leading the Equipe GTS field, would go on to win the 40-minute contest

Smith victorious at MG and Triumph celebration

SILVERSTONE
MG AND TRIUMPH 100
10-11 JUNE

The MG Car Club and Equipe Classic Racing brought full line-ups to their mid-year Silverstone showpiece, which this time celebrated the centenaries of MG and Triumph.

Tom Smith surprised himself by winning Equipe's 55-car GTS race, since he'd assumed that his MGB Roadster's relative lack of straightline punch would be punished on the vast Grand Prix circuit. But he remained in a net lead throughout the 40-minute pitstop race, although Lee Atkins, returning after nine months away, was always close in his TVR Grantura. They were aided, too, when polesitter Sam Kirkpatrick had a wheel depart early on after a front hub sheared on his MGB. "It was just a case of staying away from everyone," Smith explained of his approach. "That's why I

came in for an early pitstop. They would have just got me down the straights."

The GTS entry was beaten by the 60 cars in Equipe's Libre race, which was won by Mike Whitaker in his TVR Griffith. He led all the way, but was given a sizable gap over the previously close David Methley's AC Cobra due to a safety car intervention.

Whitaker then also won the Super Libre race. Nick Whale had looked set to dominate in his Ford Escort Mk2 but his pitstop was lengthy due to an exhaust problem, letting Whitaker ahead.

Grahame Bryant, after a cautious qualifying in his Morgan +8, quickly rose from fifth on the grid to lead Equipe's 70s/Pre '63/50s race and, helped by perfect pitstop timing just before a safety car, he was able to beat Steve Dance's Ford Capri.

Appropriately in a meeting celebrating MG's centenary, the MGCC's most entertaining race was from the pre-war Triple-Ms. Although Roland Wettstein

won both races in his Parnell-MG K3, much of the excitement derived from father-and-son Mike and Harry Painter sharing an MG Kayne Special.

In race one, poleman Mike spun from first to fourth and, before he could recover, he was slowed by his gearbox oil leaking onto his clutch. Painter Jr took over the car for race two, and he climbed from the back to lead, but then hit the same problem as his dad. Wettstein passed him for first, but on the final lap sensationally spun at the Loop. This let Painter's ailing mount back into the lead, but the recovering Wettstein closed rapidly in the final corners and got to the line first by half a length.

There was plenty of success for MGCC returnees over the weekend. One was Matt Simpson, more commonly found in the MG Metro Cup these days, who won both MG Cup races in his Tomcat despite a fuel pressure issue. In both races he was chased by another returnee, Chris Boulton.

Mark Wright was the concurrent Cockshoot Cup's pacesetter in his ex-Vince Martin MGF Cup car, with Chris Greenbank's MGF also lonely in second. Yet both retired almost simultaneously late in the first race – Wright after a crank nut loosened and Greenbank with a driveshaft failure – to hand Keith Egar victory. Wright and Greenbank made amends with first and second respectively in race two.

Another returnee, Fred Burgess, won both MG Trophy races. Race one was comfortable for the 2020 and 2021 frontrunner, but in race two he had to resist a close-chasing Adam Jackson, who had sorted his MG ZR 190's overheating problems between races.

Stephen Watkins held a 100% Midget

Whitaker took the Libre and Super Libre wins in his TVR Griffith

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MICK WALKER

WEEKEND WINNERS

EQUIPE GTS

Tom Smith (MGB Roadster)

EQUIPE LIBRE

Mike Whitaker (TVR Griffith)

EQUIPE SUPER LIBRE

Mike Whitaker (TVR Griffith)

EQUIPE 70s/PRE '63/50s

Grahame Bryant (Morgan +8)

TRIPLE-M RACING CHALLENGE

Races 1 & 2 Roland Wettstein (Parnell-MG K3)

COCKSHOOT CUP/MG CUP

Race 1 Keith Egar (MG Midget)

Race 2 Mark Wright (MGF Cup Car)

MG TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Fred Burgess (ZR 190)

BCV8/MIDGET & SPRITE CHALLENGE

Race 1 David Weston (MG Midget, below)

Race 2 Neil Fowler (MGB GT)

GT & SPORTS CAR CUP

John Pearson/Gary Pearson (Jaguar E-type)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

& Sprite Challenge win record this year heading into the weekend, but his Silverstone visit was tough. First, he missed the opener after a qualifying off and David Weston got the win. Watkins returned for race two and charged from the rear to challenge Weston for the lead. But as they headed onto the final tour, Watkins pulled out to pass Weston on the pit straight, only to hit the passing James Wheeler in his MGB V8 – the BCV8 Championship racing concurrently. The resultant crash accounted for all three and Neil Fowler inherited the win in his MGB GT from Martin Morris's Midget. Earlier, Wheeler had passed Fowler on the final lap for BCV8 victory in the opening race, as Fowler struggled with his gearbox.

John and Gary Pearson won the GT & Sports Car Cup 90-minute event-closer, although they only prevailed in the Jaguar E-type-dominated contest after long-time leaders James and Graeme Dodd got two drive-through penalties for speeding.

GRAHAM KEILLOH



IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION Colin Robertson raced his MG3 for the first time this year, this time with a turbo to negate the MG3's weight disadvantage. He finished 10th and eighth, with championship bosses hopeful he will blaze a trail by showing that the modern MG3 can be competitive in the MG Trophy. "We went to our maximum boost setting [in race two] and it was almost keeping up with the [MG ZR] 170s," said Robertson. "I want to be beyond that, I'm going to have to do some modifications."



ENGINE DOWNGRADE Equipe co-owner Rob Cull's labour of love, an Andy Rouse Ford Capri replica, had its latest outing last weekend. After its engine failure on its Brands Hatch debut, the Capri had a standard two-litre road unit in at Silverstone in the Equipe 70s race. "We're waiting on the three-litre to come in," said Cull. We've got about 100bhp instead of 260, but the car ran really well. Once we have some power, it's going to be a hoot to drive."



MIXING IT WITH THE BIG CATS In the GT & Sports Car Cup enduro, the first five qualifiers were Jaguar E-types, but Robin Ellis shook things up in his elegant Lotus Elan. He shared it with Julian Thomas, a late replacement for Nick Padmore, and they finished fifth. "It's very satisfying to be a bit of a giant-killer, which is what the 26Rs always do with Cobras and E-types," Ellis said. "The old Colin Chapman thing of added lightness is something that almost every manufacturer's forgotten."

Camp gets off the mark with Civic triumph

OULTON PARK
BRSCC
10 JUNE

Amid a day of hectic tin-top action, Alistair Camp kept a cool head to take his first Civic Cup win of 2023 while misfortune struck other title contenders.

Having traced his low-end power deficit at previous rounds to a cracked fuel pump, Camp was back on the pace at Oulton Park. Starting second in the opening race, he shadowed poleman Morgan Bailey until third-placed Jack Harding lost his car under braking for the Island hairpin, spinning across the grass and wiping out Bailey. Both cars suffered heavy damage but the drivers walked away.

Camp, who narrowly avoiding getting collected himself, was declared victorious from Max Edmundson and Danny Hobson.

Camp's Pro Alloys team-mate Will Redford won the reversed-grid race via bold outside-line passes on Tommy Knight and Nick Charlier. Camp worked his way up from 10th, balancing pace with aggression, patience and opportunism to clinch third, just shy of David Buky. Another frontrunner to crash out of the opener, Dan Thackeray climbed up from the back to 10th.



TCR UK victories were split between Bruce Winfield and Carl Boardley. After struggling for ultimate pace at the previous round, Winfield and Area Motorsport team-mate Alex Ley shed compensation weight, and their Hyundai i30 Ns duly locked out the front row.

Ley kept it pinned around the outside of Old Hall to lead and also got the jump after a mid-race safety car. But Winfield reeled him back in and, with Ley's brakes overheating after losing a duct, a lock-up allowed Winfield through at the hairpin. Jac Constable's Rob Boston Racing Audi RS3 LMS also went by with a last-lap

cutback exiting Lodge to secure second.

Track-limits penalties demoted Boardley's Cupra Leon from fifth to 10th, the silver lining being reversed-grid pole. He was never headed en route to a maiden TCR victory ahead of Darelle Wilson and Brad Hutchison. From row five, Winfield managed sixth to consolidate his points lead over Boardley.

The Fiesta ST150s provided some of the day's best racing, with multiple drivers in contention. Sam Watkins, who claimed pole before exploring the Lodge gravel in qualifying, led most of the opener until ABS issues allowed Paul Dobson past.

Jaguar honours split by Connew and Lenthall

CASTLE COMBE
CCRC
10-11 JUNE

Guy Connew harnessed the V12 power of his Jaguar XJS to take Jaguar Challenge honours in an entertaining tussle at Castle Combe, before Tom Lenthall scored a Sunday success in his straight-six version.

Connew's car had to withstand a



relentless chase from the Class B machines of Lenthall and Colin Philpott – and, before it expired, the more standard XK8 piloted by Mike Seabourne – to take Saturday's opener. A sticking gear selector thwarted Philpott's last-lap challenge and allowed Lenthall to snatch second, although it was academic when Philpott's car weighed in 8kg short and he was disqualified.

Ballast added, Philpott charged from the back to join the leading pair before a lap was complete on Sunday morning, only to be sidelined by a loose alternator wire.

Connew's big V12 found cornering even tougher as rain fell, and Lenthall pounced to claim his first-ever victory. A momentary cut-out then dropped Connew to fifth as Andrew Harper's supercharged S-type and Jack Robinson's XK completed the podium.

A very successful weekend for Jason West brought four wins across Classic Thunder and Kumho BMWs – but a revolving cast of foes kept him honest. After Bryan Bransom's demise in the first Kumho clash,

West tracked the similar E46 M3 of James Card – competing in his late father Rodger's memorial race – until Card hit trouble on the final tour. Card's car lasted only a handful of laps in the rematch, but Bransom powered from the back to lead West by mid-race. Alas, a wheel hub failure pitched Bransom off, bringing an early halt.

Nick Vaughan's Audi A3 led Saturday's Classic Thunder thrash before blowing a turbo pipe. Meantime, West had cleared polesitter Jasver Sapra's M3 and then eked out a small margin en route to victory.

The quadruple was completed on Sunday afternoon as West hounded Sam Wilson (third in Rikki Cann's Aston Martin V8 Vantage on Saturday) until the closing stages. West's tighter line through Camp allowed him alongside before completing the move into Quarry on the penultimate lap. Vaughan took third from the back.

Shaun Goverd's brace in the local Hot Hatch series came in contrasting fashions. His Citroen AX headed the Peugeot 106s of

RACHEL BOURNE



RACHEL BOURNE

Winfield was back on top and leads the points in TCR UK after Oulton

But Dobson's lead was brief as he skittered through the Druids gravel, which later caused a gear-linkage failure on the final corner. As Mike Blackburn was baulked, Sam Beckett grabbed second, which became first when Watkins was penalised for an out-of-position start. Minus Watkins, race two was just as lively. Blackburn and Ethan Rogers enjoyed spells leading, but Dobson outfoxed Rogers, who then lost gears and fell back. Dan Robinson finished second and Beckett third after an earlier clash with Blackburn. Luke Hilton put a difficult Croft weekend behind him with a pair of Fiesta Junior wins.

Robust defence helped Sam Naser to be best of the rest twice, with Dan Lewis and Maks Solarski claiming a podium apiece. Simon Horrobin thought he had secured a Fiesta ST240 double but an out-of-position start penalty dropped him to seventh in race two. A clash between Alastair Kellett and Zac Lucas at the start of the opener removed two of Horrobin's rivals, as teenagers Albert Webster and Joe Knight completed the podium. Horrobin's race two rebuttal of Knight assisted Webster to snatch second, which turned into a maiden victory.

MARK PAULSON



STEVE JONES

Connew took the opening win in Jaguar Challenge

Geoffrey Ryall and Shaun Deacon by more than 20 seconds in the damp opener, as not aligning the clutch to match a new gearbox installed overnight in his Honda Civic cut short Chris Southcott's challenge. Problem fixed, Southcott's pressure on Goverd told at Quarry four laps into the dry 12-lap sequel. Goverd hit back in traffic, and Southcott ran wide from his momentarily successful attack at Quarry on the final tour, forcing him to settle for second. Michael Gibbins won both Sports 2000 Duratec races, but only after a seized diff on Josh Law's similar MCR caused the

champion to spin from the lead in the opener. Gibbins's consistent pace took him to victory by nearly 30s on Sunday, with Paul Trayhurn and David Houghton repeating their Saturday podiums, as Law took fifth behind Richard Johnson. Paul Streat twice headed Charlie Hyett in the Historic races. After four narrow Combe Formula Ford defeats to Felix Fisher, Luke Cooper twice edged his rival in two close-fought contests, with Ben Mitchell and Adam Higgins sharing third and fourth places.

MARK PAULSON

WEEKEND WINNERS

OULTON PARK CIVIC CUP

Race 1 Alistair Camp Race 2 Will Redford

TCR UK

Race 1 Bruce Winfield (Hyundai i30 N)
Race 2 Carl Boardley (Cupra Leon Competicion)

FIESTA ST150

Race 1 Sam Beckett Race 2 Paul Dobson

FIESTA JUNIOR

Races 1 & 2 Luke Hilton (ST)

FIESTA ST240

Race 1 Simon Horrobin Race 2 Albert Webster

CASTLE COMBE

CTCRC JAGUAR CHALLENGE

Race 1 Guy Connew (XJS)
Race 2 Tom Lenthall (XJS)

KUMHO BMW

Races 1 & 2 Jason West (M3 E46)

CTCRC CLASSIC & HISTORIC THUNDER

Races 1 & 2 Jason West (BMW M3 E46)

CCRC HOT HATCH

Races 1 & 2 Shaun Goverd (Citroen AX)

SPORTS 2000 DURATEC

Races 1 & 2 Michael Gibbins (MCR S2n)

SPORTS 2000 HISTORIC

Races 1 & 2 Paul Streat (Lola T87/90)

CCRC FORMULA FORD 1600

Races 1 & 2 Luke Cooper (Swift SC20)

CCRC SALOONS

Race 1 Harrison Chamberlain
(Volkswagen Golf GTI)
Race 2 Gary Prebble (SEAT Leon)

MG OWNERS' CLUB

Races 1 & 2 Steve McDermid (ZR 170)

CTCRC PRE-'66/PRE-'83 TOURING CARS

Race 1 Will Davison (BMW E30)
Race 2 Stephen Primett (Ford Escort Mk1)

CTCRC PRE-'93/PRE-'03 TOURING CARS/BOSS

Race 1 Stuart Waite (BMW M3 E36, below)
Race 2 Mike Manning
(Ford Sierra Cosworth RS500)

PRODUCTION GTI/Z CARS

Race 1 Simon Hill (Volkswagen Golf GTI)
Race 2 Chris Jackson (Audi TT)



STEVE JONES

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Cullen's perfect weekend after braces in Strykers and Fiestas

MONDELLO PARK
MPSC
10-11 JUNE

Michael Cullen was on top form at Mondello Park last weekend, doing the double in both the Irish Stryker class and the Fiesta ST series as he was shadowed home in each of the former races by team-mate Kevin O'Hara.

Drafted into the second LOH Motorsport Fiesta ST for the weekend was fellow Lotus Cortina competitor David Dickenson, who duly followed Cullen home in race one but, with the top six reversed in race two, Dickenson was

caught back in the mid-pack. Cullen, on the other hand, charged up to grab the lead from impressive newbie Sylvie Bartlett, with Kian O'Brien completing the podium.

Dave Maguire qualified his Fiesta Zetec on pole and, after a series of safety cars and a stoppage, led the pack over the line for his maiden win. In race two, former champion Michael Barrable got the job done from James Byrne, who just held off Alan Dawson.

Barry Rabbitt's Dallara F312 beat poleman Tony Greenan's F317 example off the line in the Formula BOSS Ireland opener and, with a superb defensive drive, held him off to the flag, with Shane Rabbitt third in his brother's old Formula Renault. In race two, Greenan got a better start and disappeared into the distance. Barry Rabbitt ran second before pitting late on to remove loose bodywork, elevating Michael Roche to second, with a delighted Shane Rabbitt completing the podium once again.

Colm Blackburn took Formula Vee honours, courtesy of a stunning opening lap where he passed Anthony Cross around the outside at Turn 3, and Lee Newsome at the Esses to grab the lead. Sean Newsome took the earlier B/C race from an in-form Ger Byrne and the impressive Paul Lewis.

Cian Walsh took a pair of convincing Irish



Cochrane won both HRCA races in Sunbeam Tiger

MICHAEL CHESTER



MICHAEL CHESTER

Touring Car Championship wins, his Honda Civic well clear of Owain Drought's VW Golf in both. Colin Morris took the Honda Cup honours first time round, with a hugely impressive run from David Flynn meaning he took the trophy in race two.

After a bad qualifying, Cameron Fenton fought his way to the front to take a pair of Global GT Light wins. Jack Finlay and Peter Drennan were next up, with Drennan inheriting second when Finlay slowed in the closing stages of race two.

Top step at last for Humphries with third new car

MALLORY PARK
750MC
11 JUNE

On a momentous day when James Calado – a retirement in a Stock Hatch race at Mallory Park in 2008 – immortalised himself among the 750 Motor Club's alumni by winning the Le Mans 24 Hours, Jeff Humphries scored a brilliant maiden Type R Trophy victory driving his third EP3 of the season.

While karting ace Calado was chasing a licence upgrade signature for Formula

Renault over 15 years ago, Humphries finished third in the same Stock Hatch race aboard a Peugeot 106.

Having started his Type R debut at Oulton Park last May from pole, Humphries began this season in the same car, but engine failure in testing for Croft's opener meant Danny Hobson lent him another.

Despite taking pole, third and second at Brands Hatch in the silver machine, Humphries snapped up the ex-Conor Murphy dayglo car and qualified second with it at Mallory. Trying to round Miles Nathaniel-James at Gerard's in the opening

stampede ended with him on the grass, but Humphries recovered from 10th to third behind Matt Wilkins and winner (and polesitter) Joe Jessup.

From eighth in the partially reversed-grid sequel, Humphries forged ahead decisively on lap two, as Jessup and Wilkins took longer to reach second and third.

Nathaniel-James stopped at Shaw's Hairpin inside a lap in race one due to a blown fuel pump relay fuse, but salvaged 11th from 28th despite an off at Gerard's.

The Historic 750 Formula generated a good spectator turnout, as Tim Sage used his U2's 1000cc Ford power to end John Village's 10-race run in his eponymous V2.

They traded the lead before Village, slipstreaming Sage, was chopped by a lapped Austin 7 into Gerard's to give Sage the advantage he needed. Village won later when a brush with a backmarker spun Sage at Gerard's. Behind them, Swiss commuter Juerg Schneider (Arthur JSG), Ian Grant (Racekits Falcon) and Graham Wilson (Time 3B) twice traversed Devil's Elbow abreast. Tim Roebuck's ex-John Miles supercharged



Third different EP3 gave Humphries victory

STEVE JONES



Jackie Cochrane won both Historic Racing Car Association races, despite the best efforts of the charging Stephen Kelly, whose Mallock was arguably faster around a lap but couldn't keep with the roaring V8 Tiger on the straights.

Peter Barrable scored a pair of dominant Irish Legends wins but Jamie Moylan took the third race, with Barrable crossing the line in second, 5.1 seconds back.

David Hammond's Fiat Uno was awarded Super Future Classic honours when the

leading duo of Ian Thornton and Robert Doherty smashed the all-important barrier time. Paul Flanagan's Renault Clio 172 was second, despite a penalty, with Donal Culloity third.

In race two, Doherty managed to avoid breaking the time barrier to take victory, with Flanagan and Hammond right with him as he crossed the line. Luke Marmion and Pat O'Malley shared the Future Classic wins.

LEO NULTY



special starred among the Austin 7s.

Ma7da competitors showcased their dynamic machines across two frenetic races. Poleman Eddie Mawer beat jostling Jonathan Lisseter and Ben Powney first time out. When Mawer slithered wide into the hairpin on the last lap of race two, Lisseter gratefully grabbed the gift to stretch his points lead as Powney completed the podium again.

Dans Silvester and Brown ended Ryan Polley's four-race Hot Hatch supremacy, their older, lighter, Honda Civics dropping his EP3. Double victor Silvester lowered the lap record to 51.10s (95.11mph).

Mathew Mandipira beat Joel Arguelles — joint points leader with Polley prior

to the meeting — in Class B, their Renault Clio 197s split by Stuart Kennedy's VW Corrado later. Callum Perfect and David Drinkwater (BMW Compacts) each bagged a Class C win.

Quadruple champion Shaun Traynor atoned for his Brands Hatch exclusion by winning both MR2 bouts, making it five from eight. Third behind Neil Stratton and then second ahead of Mk2 standout Silvester meant Adam Lockwood vaulted absentee Karl Johnston to top the table.

Jordan Johnson chased Ben Short home in both MX-5 Cup races, while Oak Richardson and Matthew Pennefather-Neal resisted Scott Leach and the pack to land thirds.

MARCUS PYE

WEEKEND WINNERS

MONDELLO PARK
IRISH STRYKERS
Races 1 & 2 Michael Cullen

FIESTA ST CHAMPIONSHIP
Races 1 & 2 Michael Cullen

FIESTA ZETEC CHAMPIONSHIP
Race 1 David Maguire
Race 2 Michael Barrable

FORMULA BOSS IRELAND
Race 1 Barry Rabbitt (Dallara F312)
Race 2 Tony Greenan (Dallara F317)

FORMULA VEE
Race 1 Sean Newsome (Sheane)
Race 2 Colm Blackburn (Leystone JH002)

IRISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP
Races 1 & 2 Cian Walsh (Honda Civic)

IRISH GLOBAL GT LIGHTS
Races 1 & 2 Cameron Fenton

HISTORIC RACING CAR ASSOCIATION
Races 1 & 2 Jackie Cochrane (Sunbeam Tiger)

IRISH LEGENDS
Races 1 & 2 Peter Barrable
Race 3 Jamie Moylan

FUTURE CLASSICS
Race 1 David Hammond (Fiat Uno)
Race 2 Robert Doherty (Honda Civic)

FORMULA SHEANE
Race 1 Keith Hogg
Race 2 Richard Kearney

For full results visit: timing.ie

MALLORY PARK
TYPE R TROPHY
Race 1 Joe Jessup
Race 2 Jeff Humphries

HISTORIC 750 FORMULA
Race 1 Tim Sage (U2 Mk4)
Race 2 John Village (Village V2)

MA7DA
Race 1 Eddie Mawer (below)
Race 2 Jonathan Lisseter

HOT HATCH
Races 1 & 2 Dan Silvester (Honda Civic)

TOYOTA MR2
Races 1 & 2 Shaun Traynor (Roadster)

MAZDA MX-5 CUP
Races 1 & 2 Ben Short



For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk



A biofuel-powered Mazda MX-5 is set to join the Club Enduro grid later this year

STEVE JONES

THE STEPS NEEDED TO HELP SAVE THE FUTURE OF MOTORSPORT

With the threat of climate change growing, the UK is at last starting to embrace vital sustainable initiatives

STEFAN MACKLEY

“

It's fundamental to our existence and the future that we get this right.” Such a statement might seem extreme, almost sensationalist, but Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers is acutely aware of exactly how important embracing sustainability has become.

Whether it's referred to as climate change or global warming, it is (pardon the pun) a hot topic and with good reason. The flooding that caused the cancellation of the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix and the wildfires that have engulfed parts of Canada are just two of the high-profile climate disasters around the globe in recent weeks.

Closer to home, the UK is undergoing another heatwave as global temperatures continue to rise year on year. There's no escaping this stark reality, and it means a greater focus is being placed on all aspects of society to lower carbon emissions. Motorsport, rightly or wrongly, is under scrutiny more than any other sport and, as a result, critiqued immensely on what it's doing to make a difference.

“A few years ago, I remember having a conversation with one of the larger circuit owners in this country and they were extremely sceptical about the need to embark on any proactive interventions in regard to sustainability,” says Chambers. “I think the actual expression they used was, ‘if you put your head above the parapet then it will just draw everyone's focus to us, and everyone will start zoning in on us.’ Fast forward a couple of years and the attitude has literally gone 180 degrees, which is that we need to be on the front foot. We need to be leading and we need to be setting examples.”

Rather than ignoring the issue – or denying that it's even one in the first place – Motorsport UK is facing the challenge head-on. The governing body released a Sustainability Strategy to look at how it can make a positive impact on the environment, as well as society and the economy more generally. This it hopes will be achieved by working alongside the FIA and adopting 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals as outlined by the United Nations.

While the UK's governing body itself intends to reach a net-zero carbon footprint by the end of 2025, it also hopes to reduce 50% of the carbon emissions of all UK motorsport by 2030, primarily by using sustainable fuels, which it intends to make available at all venues by 2026. It also wants to make greater use of electric vehicles in disciplines such as StreetCar, and seeks to inspire the next generation of engineers and participants through its involvement with F1 in Schools, Greenpower and Formula Student.

Motorsport UK has offered resources and guidance to clubs and competitors on how they can reduce their own carbon footprints. Head of sustainability Jess Runicles believes that while the governing body should be leading the way, it also needs to >>

empower clubs, venues and competitors to make a difference on their own. “It’s about engaging the community,” she says. “How do we support our community, whether it’s licence holders, venues or clubs, to reduce their own emissions?”

“And that’s around providing tools, it’s about providing guidance. It’s talking to people, understanding that venues and clubs might have slightly different areas of interest or areas that they should be focusing on. That’s also different from a competitor.”

One notable resource it offered earlier this year is a carbon calculator, whereby clubs and venues can work out the CO₂ emissions from competitors across a year. This work was initially the brainchild of the Vintage Sports-Car Club, which was recognised for its sustainability work and awarded the Sustainable Club of the Year award by Motorsport UK in 2022. The club runs some of the oldest cars in the UK across various disciplines including race, hillclimb and trial meetings, and is also leading the way on sustainable initiatives. This began with the carbon calculator, on which it started work in the wake of the COVID-19 lockdown, allowing it to accurately predict and ultimately offset its carbon emissions.

“I think it [the pandemic] gave us some time to look at the big picture and we were very lucky that we had a new member [Mark

“The role of motorsport isn’t just to reduce its environmental impact, but also to become a leader in technology”

Dibben] who’s an academic and has been able to lead the working party that’s looked at this, and make recommendations that perhaps we wouldn’t have thought about without his influence,” says Tania Brown, the VSCC’s club secretary. “Not only now do we offset all of our competition events by 400%, but we also offer all of the business miles that we do. We’re now looking at also offsetting all of our staff home-to-work mileage and allowing people to offset the emissions from a car build and parts if they’re purchasing parts.”

The VSCC’s carbon offsetting is done through a company called Tree-V and is achieved through tree-planting and peatland restoration in the UK, as well as via ‘carbon credits’, which are used to buy the power generated by wind turbines in India. Brown is keen to stress that although carbon offsetting “can be seen as greenwashing” by some, the VSCC has been thorough with its research and “we do our own due diligence, to the extent that actually we highlighted a particular project to them [Tree-V] that we didn’t think met the Gold Standard Certification, and they reviewed it and removed it from the programme.”

VSCC describes its ethos as “the ultimate in repair, reuse and recycle”



MICK WALKER

The 750 Motor Club is another organisation in the UK that has taken active steps on sustainability, becoming the first club to carbon offset in 2021 alongside Racezero, the creation of CALM All Porsche Trophy organiser Philip Waters.

While the VSCC passes the cost on to club members – the highest total is £21.40 for trial competitors across the year, applied through entry fees – the 750MC absorbs the cost completely. The club works with Carbon Neutral Britain to offset the emissions of its competitors from all of its events, primarily with the planting of trees in the UK and, like the VSCC, has looked to expand offsetting beyond the track.

Giles Groombridge, the 750MC’s competitions manager, believes that while other sectors may produce more carbon emissions, motorsport in particular is under scrutiny and needs to take action. “In the short term does it need to?” he asks. “Maybe, maybe not. But I think certainly medium to long term it does. And it’s not just motorsport – all manner of industries will have to. I think if you really look at what impact motorsport has on the environment compared

750 Motor Club has been a UK carbon-offsetting pioneer



STEVE JONES



to commuting or aviation travel, it's minimal, but a lot of it I guess is hearts and minds and how things look. I think it is important and I know Motorsport UK share that view."

While carbon offsetting is an initiative that continues to grow in club motorsport, a bigger topic centres on how cars will be powered in the future. Electric and hydrogen are the most publicised alternatives to the internal combustion engine, but Chambers is keen to point out that making the switch to either is no mean feat, and for the survival of national motorsport it has become imperative to explore all options.

"We ran an open day in Parliament last July, and the theme was 'the future is eclectic, not just electric'. We wanted to play our role in lobbying politicians and, without being patronising, educating politicians," says Chambers. "By all means, legislate for the outcome, net-zero by a given date, but leave it to the clever engineers and to the scientists and the petro-chemical companies to come up with the most effective solutions."

"I think the role of motorsport isn't just to reduce its environmental impact, but also to become a leader in technology which it's done so successfully over many decades. We've got to recognise that with the 60,000 competitors we've got in the UK, all of them bar a handful are using hydrocarbon-fuelled internal combustion engines, and that's not going to change any time soon. You marry that together with the fact that there are 1.3 billion internal combustion engines worldwide and you realise the scale of transition."

One of the answers, at least in the short term, is the use of synthetic and biofuels – something that is already being implemented not only at the top of the sport in Formula 1 but also at a national level. While renewable fuels are currently more expensive than conventional fuels, the price is coming down and the availability is going up, which is starting to make it a viable option for competitors in the UK.

Both the VSCC and 750MC are already looking into the technology this season and have hopes that competitors running on the alternative fuel will take the track. The 750MC has changed the regulations in its



Club Enduro Championship to allow cars to run the alternative fuel, with a Mazda MX-5 expected out later this year using a German-made biofuel, while the VSCC also hopes to have two cars using synthetic fuel in action in different disciplines.

"Our cars aren't natural for EV conversion," points out Brown. "For us, an engine is the beating heart of the car and stripping that out and putting an electronic unit in isn't part of what we are, which is the ultimate in repair, reuse and recycle."

We're keeping cars on the road, but we have to do that responsibly. People are rightly worried about the environment. We've got a very strong youth section, but we're also lucky that we have an older demographic who have the means to be able to pay for some of the more expensive fuels."

While solutions continue to be developed and implemented, the hardest challenge remains in changing the mindset of competitors, clubs and venues to the idea that they need to embrace sustainability. But it's becoming less of a taboo word, and more people are starting to acknowledge it as the solution rather than the problem. "We don't get too much pushback or criticism," says Groombridge. "I wouldn't say we've had loads of interest, but I think it's a case of educating people. While there's still a lot of people out there that don't believe in global warming, and think it's all a hoax or a conspiracy, if you explain it to them on the basis that we're trying to safeguard your passion by doing this, much in the same way that when you roll out the latest safety improvements that keep the sport insurable, then they start to get it."

Attitudes have already begun to change. The VSCC has been approached by various other clubs in the UK about how best to begin their own sustainability work, with the carbon calculator and other resources available for free on its website.

Motorsport faces an uphill battle, but steps are being made to help secure the future of the sport. As Chambers says: "We really are taking this extremely seriously. It's stating the blindingly obvious, but if motorsport, of all the sports, doesn't take sustainability seriously, we'd be shooting ourselves in the foot." ❧

FINISHING STRAIGHT

Racing in the right direction again



VIDEO GAME

F1 23

(available on PC, PlayStation, and Xbox)
RRP £69.99

A new year and a new official Formula 1 video game from Codemasters and

Electronic Arts. *F1 23* has some ground to make up after *F1 22*'s post-launch instabilities, superfluous supercars and inconsistent handling left us to look elsewhere for our virtual driving kicks after the initial shine had worn off.

For this year's edition, which will be released tomorrow (16 June), we must first touch upon Braking Point 2, a story mode continuation from *F1 2021*. Fictional racers Aiden Jackson and Devon Butler return

alongside a roster of new additions, such as Davidoff Butler, Devon's father. He also happens to be the majority investor in the Konnersport team that fields the duo. Then there's Formula 2 driver Callie Mayer, who happens to be part of the Butler family too.

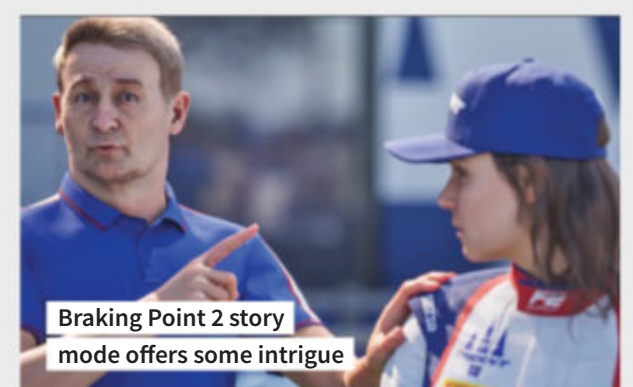
Between on-track driving challenges, you follow the cast's plight through cutscenes. Strangely, two years ago Jackson was the main focus, but his character barely develops this time, bordering on unlikeable. Instead, the Butler clan take the lead, with Devon stealing the show. Fun for those who've just watched the latest *Drive to Survive* season, but a little perfunctory. Previous Madden NFL games have also shown it's possible to create non-linear narratives within a yearly sports franchise.

Elsewhere, *F1 World* is a new main hub. Building from features in last year's title such as *F1 Life* and *Podium Pass*, it combines

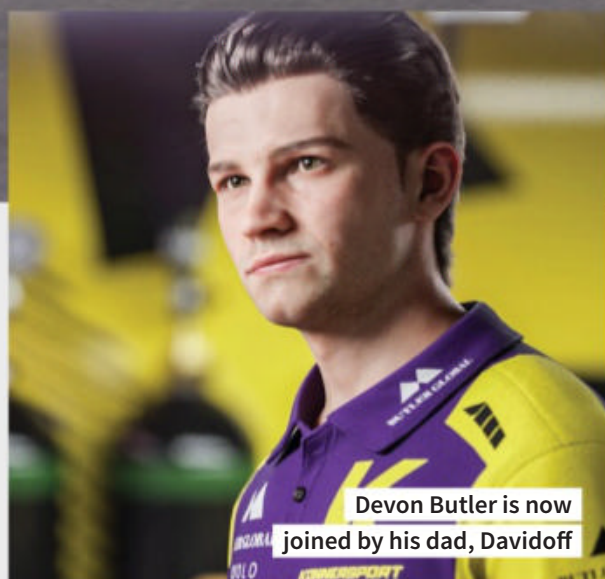
most of the game under one banner with aspects reminiscent of a smartphone app. It's something like FIFA Ultimate Team, but you earn car parts and engineering team members. Those upgrades contribute to an overall tech score that determines performance. Purists look the other way, as elements include, for example, increased downforce at American tracks or reduced weight if you set a quick first sector.

It seems to be aimed at bringing in and maintaining a younger audience, and it does hook you in. However, not much has changed in the My Team managerial career mode, which historically is the main draw. There's a nagging feeling that we'd prefer more of that, and less of *F1 World*.

When it comes to the core driving experience, however, things are dramatically improved. *F1 23* will still punish you for poor driving, but that razor's edge we experienced 12 months ago has been dulled. You can catch a slide thanks to greater feedback through a steering wheel, and with a controller, more precise steering inputs. There's generally more grip, through what feels like higher levels of downforce, although for those who like to tinker, the set-up window has increased.



Braking Point 2 story mode offers some intrigue



ALL PICS: F123

Devon Butler is now
joined by his dad, Davidoff

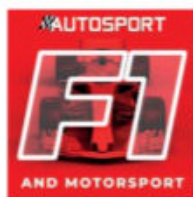
Losail and the stunning Las Vegas Strip are also present as new venues. Most tracks outside of that are still the same as they have been (for better or worse), with a few such as Barcelona receiving the necessary layout update. Besides the schedule, the 2023 line-up of drivers and teams, the added (paid for) icons and updated rankings remain familiar. That's not to say it's a bad thing, actually that may be a strength. Outside of F1 World, it maintains an authentic experience for those racing diehards and the online, cross-platform, multiplayer options are as plentiful as ever, only now with a new licensing system.

We likely won't be playing *F1 22* again any time soon for the same reasons we will probably get deeper into *F1 23* this year. The driving experience makes it enjoyable, and we can enjoy racing at our personalised pace. Even if Braking Point 2 or F1 World may not be for you, there's enough intrigue there to at least try them. How it will stand when players hit the online servers remains to be seen, but let's hope it's more stable than last time. *F1 23* is more of the same, yet crucially better on track.

JUSTIN MELILLO

For daily racing game news, visit **traxion.gg**

FINISHING STRAIGHT



2023 Le Mans 24 Hours review

Ferrari scored its first outright Le Mans 24 Hours victory in 58 years as Alessandro Pier Guidi, James Calado and Antonio Giovinazzi took top honours ahead of Toyota in the centenary edition of the race. The Autosport team discuss all the highs and lows from a chaotic race.

[autosport.com/podcast](https://www.autosport.com/podcast)

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Canadian Grand Prix F1 World Championship Round 8/22

Montreal, Canada

18 June

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1855

TV Highlights

Sky Sports F1, Sun 2230, Channel 4, Sun 2330

IndyCar Series

Round 8/17

Road America, USA

18 June

TV Live Sky Sports Mix, Sun 1800

Indy NXT

Round 5/12

Road America, USA

18 June

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1600

Super Formula

Round 4/7

Sugo, Japan

17-18 June

TV Live on Motorsport.tv, Sat 0600, Sun 0615

FRECA

Round 3/10

Hungaroring, Hungary

17-18 June

TV Live via YouTube, Sat 0800, Sun 0800

Euroformula Open

Round 3/8

Hungaroring, Hungary

17-18 June



Livestream on

Motorsport.tv, Sun 0950, Sun 1415

International GT Open

Round 3/7

Hungaroring, Hungary

17-18 June

TV Live on

Motorsport.tv, Sat 0845, Sat 1310, Sun 0840, Sun 1245

TCR World Tour

Round 4/9

Hungaroring, Hungary

17-18 June

Australian Supercars

Round 5/12

Darwin, Australia

17-18 June

TV Live

BT Sport 2, Sat 0630, BT Sport 3, Sun 0300, BT Sport 2, Sun 0630

World Rallycross

Round 2/8

17-18 June

Hell, Norway

MotoGP

Round 7/20

Sachsenring, Germany

17-18 June

TV Live BT Sport 2, Sun 1230

TV Highlights ITV4, Mon 2000

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park BARC

17-18 June

BTCC, British F4, Mini Challenge, Porsche Carrera Cup GB, Radical Cup UK

TV Live ITV, Sun 1200, ITV4, Sun 1400

Snetterton MSVR

17-18 June

British GT, GB3, GB4, Ginetta Academy, Ginetta Championship, Ginetta Junior

TV Live on

via britishgt.com

Brands Hatch MSVR

17-18 June

Bernie's V8s/Historic Outlaws, Corvette Anniversary, Legends, Pickup, NASCAR Euro Series, SpeedFest Silhouettes

Donington Park BRSCC

17-18 June

Audi TT Cup, BMW Compact Cup, C1 Endurance, Clubsport Trophy, Evolution Trophy, MG Metro Cup, National FF1600, Supersport Endurance, Zeo Prototype Series

Thruxton BARC

17-18 June

CMMC Classic Challenge, Ferrari Classic, FISCAR, Historic FF2000, Jochen Rindt Trophy, Mighty Minis

Cadwell Park VSCC

18 June

Allcomers, Frazer Nash/GN, Handicap, Historic Austin 7s, Pre-1935 Grand Prix, Pre-'66 Racing Cars, Pre-War, Scratch, VSCC Specials

British Hillclimb Championship

Round 6/14

Doune, Scotland

17-18 June



FROM THE ARCHIVE

The head-turning paint job adorning the #93 BMW 3.0 CSL at the 1975 Le Mans 24 Hours was the result of an inspired idea from French racer and art enthusiast Herve Poulain to

persuade the artist Alexander Calder to express his creative vision across the machine's bodywork. And so, thanks also to the patronage of BMW motorsport boss Jochen Neerpasch, the firm's first Art Car came into being.

It showed impressive pace, running as high as sixth in the hands of Poulain, US racer Sam Posey and 1964 24 Hours winner Jean Guichet before a broken CV joint forced its retirement, followed by life as a museum exhibit.



For classic motorsport DVDs and downloads head to dukevideo.com





COATES

Renault R25

When you've raced over a dozen different Formula 1 cars from Minardi to Ferrari, and enjoyed a lengthy GT racing career in the Prancing Horse's machinery, choosing a favourite is going to be tough.

Post-Formula 1, Giancarlo Fisichella has notched up two class victories at the Le Mans 24 Hours with AF Corse, in 2012 and 2014. And although he considers the Ferrari 458 GTE with which he took those wins among his favourites, as well as his Petit Le Mans class-winning 488 GTE, there is one car that stands out, the one that took Renault to its first constructors' F1 championship and helped Fernando Alonso to his first drivers' title – the R25.

The mighty yellow-and-blue V10 machine was quick off the blocks, enthuses Fisichella, who proclaims it as “the best car I drove in my life” and in which he claimed his second F1 win at the 2005 season opener in Australia.

“I remember already the first time I drove the car in winter testing, I felt fantastic,” he recalls. “Grip, handling of the car, I was so comfortable. The engine was fantastic, so powerful. And straight away I said we can win with this car and with a good team, good strategy, I think we can do a good season and that was true. Straight away the first race, pole position and I won. From the beginning to the end I was leading. It was a great



SUTTON

time, it was a great start.”

Fisichella has fond memories of 2005 and 2006, when Alonso and Renault took two title doubles, and says he shared “many, many good moments” with the Spaniard: “We worked together, that was very important for the team. We did well, but also there was a very good atmosphere between me and him – sharing dinner, sometimes before the race we were playing cards with Flavio Briatore. So that was a good mix, to have a good atmosphere and working together.”

Fisichella says those two seasons were “my best moments”, adding: “It's nice when you are in a good team, and you've got a good car. You go into the race weekend and mentally you know you go there for a win or to get on the podium.”

MEGAN WHITE



SUTTON

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Canadian GP action

WILL ANYONE STEP UP TO CHALLENGE VERSTAPPEN?

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORT IMAGES



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10/11 Feb 2024 Jerez /E - Race days

15/16 Feb 2024 Valencia /E - Test days

17/18 Feb 2024 Valencia /E - Race days

29/1 Mar 2024 Aragón /E - Test days

2/3 Mar 2024 Aragón /E - Race days

7/8 Mar 2024 Barcelona /E - Test days (tbc)

9/10 Mar 2024 Barcelona /E - Race days (tbc)

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18 Jul 2023 Nürburgring Sprint /D

8/9 Aug 2023 Lausitzring /D

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